

# Reflexions

UPON

## Ancient and Modern PHILOSOPHY, Moral and Natural.

Treating of the *Ægyptians, Arabians, Grecians, Romans, &c.* Philosophers; as  
*Thales, Zeno, Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Epicurus, &c.*

Also of the *English, Germans, French, Spanish, Italian, &c.* As *Bacon, Boyle, Descartes, Hobbes, Vanhelmont, Gassendus, Galileus, Harvey, Paracelsus, Messemius, Digby, &c.*

Together with the USE that is to be made thereof.

Licensed, Octob. 4. 1677. Ro. L'Estrange.

L O N D O N,

Printed, and are to be sold by *William Cademan*, and  
*William Crooke*, at the New-Exchange, and without  
Temple-Bar. 1678.

Harvard College Library,

~~III. 6933~~ Nov. 14, 1881.

LOWELL BEQUEST,

Phil 192.6 \*



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## The PREFACE.

**I** Do not pretend that these Reflexions are to be maintained as Theſes: they are but Remarks that I have made in reading of Authors, and Observations on their Sentiments, which as Conjectures I ſubmit to publick examination, and wherein I deſire my ſelf to be cleared. The chief Deſign of this Treatiſe is, to give vertuous people the true Notion of a Science, which is the Rule of other Sciences; and to declare what hath been the uſe of it in the firſt and laſt Ages, in an hiſtorical account of the progreſs, decay, and of all the revolutions which that Science hath undergone, for above the ſpace of two thouſand years; to the end that in this Abridgment, wherein I have endeavoured to comprehend ſo many things, what is ſtrong and weak, ſolid and frivolous, true and falſe in Philoſophy may be diſcerned.

A Deſign, ſo far above the capacity of

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a private person would be rash, if to prepare me for so great an undertaking, I had not consulted the Learned of all Ages upon that subject. This obliges me in the entry to declare, that I say little or nothing of my own head, and that I speak not of the Ancients and Moderns, but by the sentiments of those who have known them best. The intelligent, without advertisement, will by their own eyes easily perceive the truth of what I say: so that I need not burden a Book with Citations, whereof it is but already too full. Nor is it to play the Doctor, that now and then I speak in a strain somewhat dogmatical: it is only that I may more plainly represent to the Learned, what they already know, and revive their Notions thereof.

But though I might give the learnedest of the Ancients and Moderns for my vouchers in this particular, yet I pretend not that they should be accountable for all that I say; for I may have mistaken in citing of them: and therefore I am willing that men should know that whatever is good in this work is theirs, and what is otherways mine own.

For

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For besides that it is ridiculous to pretend to Infallibility, I am very sensible that one cannot even be exact when he grasps so many various matters. If Strabo and Diogenes Laertius have mistaken in the History of the ancient Philosophers, may not I be deceived in the account of the new? So that I shall say nothing as to that for my own justification, but what every one may tell himself in my favour, when he shall be pleased to reflect thereon.

The greatest difficulty in this work hath been to give Form to so vast a Matter; seeing the several Classes of so many different Sects, after all the Authors that have wrote thereon, are not as yet well adjusted. For Plutarch doth not distinguish, and Diogenes Laertius confounds them. Varro reckons them up to two hundred and fourscore, and Themistius to three hundred. But because that scantling alone would be too large, I have reduced them all to seven principal Sects. The first is the Sect of Pythagoras, which is much the same with that of the Egyptians: (for there is little or nothing of truth known of the

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*Philosophy of the Phenicians and Ethiopians.) The second is the Set of Socrates and Plato, of the Ancient and new Academicks, of the Pyrrhonists and Scepticks, which is originally one and the same. The third is that of Aristotle and the Peripateticks. The Fourth that of Zeno and the Stoicks, which in a right line descends from Antisthenes, Diogenes, Crates, and the Cynicks. The fifth that of the Epicureans, which is derived from Leucippus, Democritus, and Aristippus. The sixth that of the Eclecticks, whose Founder was Potamon of Alexandria. And the seventh is the Set of the Arabians, the Averroists, and the Scholasticks, or Schoolmen, which is almost the same that at present reigns in Universities. These are the limits within which I have confined my self. And on these Sets only I make these Reflexions, which I have mingled with moral Maxims, and historical hints, that I may render so dry a matter as Philosophy somewhat agreeable.*

*Now, as to the Stile: I have thought fit to express my self plainly on a subject that requires no affectation. I have not medled*

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meddled with the discussing of the Precepts that are current in the Schools, that I might not flag too low; I stick only to general Maxims, and dive no deeper: wherein I have endeavoured to imitate Cicero, who in his Books of Philosophy never almost engages in the retail of the Opinions whereof he speaks, but so far as he can do it without the loss of his usual politeness. For the reproach which he casts upon Varro strikes at himself (*Philosophiam multis locis inchoasti, ad impellendum satis, ad edocendum parum.* You have wrote enough of Philosophy to excite mens minds, but little to instruct them.) He explains only the Principles and general Maxims of every Sect, which he accompanies with some Reflexions. This I have done, that I might accommodate my self to the relish of an age, which is more affected with good sense than great learning. And seeing in the stock of these Reflexions there will be found a Satyr against false Philosophy, and an Elogie of the true; I am sure thereby not to displease the vertuous, which is the most considerable Sect of Philosophers. And it is  
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*indeed only for their sakes that I have set upon this Design, that I may give them the knowledg which reasonable men ought to have of Philosophy, and whereof many times men have but false Ideas. I have concluded this Treatise with the Use that should be made of it in matters of Religion, which men oftentimes but little regard, when they affect too much to be Philosophers. And seeing men take not always the care they should, to publish nothing but what deserves publick view, I confess that I have not perhaps taken time enough, to give this Treatise its utmost perfection. But I hope, as I am ready to make use of the advices that are given me, so I shall remedy that in a second Edition: to the end that I may make an exact Collection of six Volumes which I have written on Poetry, Eloquence, and Philosophy.*

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# Reflexions

O N

## PHILOSOPHY

in General.



THE Name of Philosopher, how simple and modest soever it be, seemed heretofore so glorious and lovely to the Learned of ancient Times, that they preferr'd it to the most splendid and lofty Titles. That love of Wisdom and study of Vertue, whereof they made Profession, raised them to such Authority over the minds of men, that their Example served for instruction, and their Maxims were re-

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ceived as Oracles by the publick. Great men asked them Counsel in the Affairs of weightiest importance : Cities and Provinces submitted to their conduct ; and Kings themselves reckoned it their glory to be their Disciples. It is true Philosophy taught *Pythagoras* the integrity of manners and austerities of life, which gained him so many Followers. It was Philosophy that made *Empedocles* refuse a Crown, and prefer a private and quiet life to all the magnificence of Grandeur. By Philosophy *Democritus* was raised to the contemplation of Nature, and renounced bodily pleasures, that he might more peaceably enjoy the delights of the Soul. Philosophy taught *Socrates* to dye without haughtiness or weakness : and though in the death of *Cato*, who affected too much the Philosopher, there appeared less modesty and tranquillity ; yet therein are also to be seen the lineaments of a greatness of mind, which made him despise life. So that there being hardly any action of constancy and steadfastness in Paganism, which



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which was not animated by Philosophy: It may be said, that it was in some manner the principle and source of the purest vertue of Heathens.

II.

The *Egyptians*, who were the first Philosophers in the world, gave so mysterious a garb to their Philosophy, that they made it pass with the People for a part of their Religion: Nor did any thing advance it more in authority with the publick, or give it greater credit among the Learned. But their Priests had no other end in shrowding their Observations of Nature, under the Veil of their Hieroglyphicks, but to keep them from the knowledge of the people, and thereby to distinguish themselves from the vulgar. As they propagated their Philosophy only by Tradition, and did not willingly communicate their knowledge to other people, so (as *Strabo* observes) there is but little known of their true Doctrine. The truth is, all that is said of Philosophy, before it became to be known in *Greece*, hath so little foundation;

and all the discourses that are found of it in the Fragments of *Sotion*, *Hermippus* and *Hermodorus*, whereof *Diogenes Laertius* makes mention, aswell as in the Dialogue of *Lucian's* Fugitives, are so fabulous, that I intend only, as to what concerns the beginning thereof, to adhere to that which is to be found in History, that I may give a more certain account of the same. Besides, that mysterious Philosophy of the *Egyptians*, is so little different from that of *Pythagoras*, that the method and principles of both are almost the same; as appears by what *Plutarch* tells us in several of his works, *Jamblicus* in the life of *Pythagoras*, *Selden*, and some others who have treated on that subject.

## III.

The *Grecians*, who shewed greater passion for the discovery of truth, than other Nations, gave themselves so earnestly to the observation of Nature, that from *Thales* to *Plato* there were more Truths concerning Natural Philosophy discovered, than in the Ages following.

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following. It must be acknowledged likewise, that Philosophy in its infancy began to produce so great wits, and that it shewed so much reason in its primitive samblings, that its first rudiments served for principles, and even for models to the following Ages. By long and constant study men observed the motion of the Heavens, distinguished their revolutions, framed the first Ideas of a Cœlestial Systeme, discovered the obliquity of the Zodiac, unfolded the most hidden things of Nature, and drew that Curtain wherewith Providence had hid the greatest part of its secrets, to present them to men as a matter of meditation and enquiry. And amongst those that laboured in the search of these Verities, *Thales, Anaximander, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus, Hippocrates, Democritus, Empedocles, and Archelaus*, obtained the greatest reputation. *Plutarch*, who in the second Tome of his Works gives the History of their Opinions, does indeed show the contradictions and absurdities whereinto for most

part they fell: Nevertheless they still deserve the praise to have been the first that ventured upon that so difficult an attempt, and by unknown Paths traced the way to those that followed them, rendring themselves considerable to Posterity, by the foundation they laid to Sciences. *Justin* in his History observes, that whilst study and meditation made Philosophers in *Greece*, Nature alone without any assistance made the like amongst the Barbarians in the middle of *Scythia*; as appears in *Abaris* and *Anacarsis*, of whom *Apuleius* speaks, who without precepts and discipline attained to Wisdom.

## IV.

To speak then properly, *Thales* and *Pythagoras* were the two Founders of the ancient Philosophy; the one in *Greece*, and the other in *Italy*. There appeared in the School of *Pythagoras* somewhat more regular and better established, than in that of *Thales* and his Successors. As in the Doctrine of *Pythagoras* every thing was  
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made mysterious; so submission was its principal Character: that religious silence which with so much rigour he made his Disciples observe, was an art to procure himself a more respectful attention. The life of that Philosopher, as well as his Doctrine, is at this day still a great subject of controversy: he was indeed a man of a deep reach, a quick and penetrating apprehension, and of indefatigable industry and application. His usual way of teaching, was by Geometry and Numbers: he explained material and sensible things by Geometry, and intellectual by Musick and Numbers. He was of too solid a judgment, to imagine any reality in Numbers, which are but only intentional Beings, as *Aristotle* proves in his *Metaphysics*. It is true he found so great a facility in explaining the perfection of every thing by harmony and proportion, after the manner of the *Egyptians*, that he expressed himself no other way: and that he made use of Numbers as of Symbols and Signs to teach with: and all that

Science of Numbers, which was so familiar to *Pythagoras*, is to this day still a kind of mystery, whereof the secret is not very well known. *Jamblicus* in the life of that Philosopher says, that he invented a musick proper for the cure and quieting of the Passions. In his Moral Philosophy there is nothing regular; only fair Maxims without Principles: his Natural Philosophy is the same almost with that of the *Platonists*. His Doctrine of two Principles, the one of good and the other of evil, on which the *Manichees* built their belief, is false; for of real Beings there is but one real Principle. *Pythagoras* in *Plutarch* boasts, that the greatest fruit which he had reaped from Philosophy was, not to wonder at any thing: because that Philosophy discovered to him the cause of every thing, as *Horace* expresses it to *Numicius*,

*Nil admirari prope res est una Numici.*

In fine, *Pythagoras* had so extraordinary a genius for Philosophy, that all  
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the other Philosophers have gloried to stick to his sentiments: *Socrates* and *Plato* have hardly any thing that is good but from him. And if we consider more narrowly, we shall even find, that amongst all other Sects almost, there is somewhat of the Spirit of *Pythagoras* that bears rule.

V.

*SOCRATES.*

*Socrates* was the first that began to reduce into method the confused Ideas of those that went before him, by ranking the Observations which he had made of Nature, in a more regular order, that he might shape them into Arts and Sciences. Though he had all the charms of wit, which flow from a pregnant genius and happy disposition, yet he wanted not depth, and all imaginable solidity. And that height of knowledge and understanding was accompanied with the true simplicity of a Child: When he applied himself to every thing, he seemed not employed in any thing: He handled obscurest matters

matters in a pleasing strain ; and his most serious meditations deprived him not of his good humour. As he never affected to talk like a wit, but as a vertuous man, so his ordinary jests were noble. He was capable of every thing, and proud of nothing. His notices, that gave instruction to others, and made them of Scholars become learned men, served only to puzzle and entangle himself, by the doubts and uncertainties which they raised in him: And for all he was so rational, yet he too much distrusted his Reason. The fertility of his wit so choaked his discerning, that his different views led him into irresolution. By his ingenuity in declaring on all occasions, that he knew nothing, he rendred the other Philosophers of his time ridiculous, who brag'd that they knew every thing: And the ignorance he made profession of, acquired him greater reputation than all his knowledge. He suffered those that disputed with him to take all the advantage over him they pleased, that he might refute them



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them with so much the more authority, as he took the less. He procured an absolute power over their sentiments, by the deference that he yielded to them: it was only by hiding his Opinion, that he forced others to follow it: And the Empire that he exercised over mens minds, was but an effect of the skill he had not to usurp any, by the indifference which he made appear for his own sentiments: as *Cicero* says, *Socrates ipse sibi detrahens, in disputatione plus tribuebat iis, quos volebat refellere.* But as he was the head of all the Sects that followed him; so was he also in some manner the Founder of all the doubts that arose amongst them. For his Reasonings tended commonly to the baffling of Reason: And as he established Sciences, so he left occasion to overthrow them; because he taught his Scholars not so much to know, as to doubt of things. Not, but that for all this he much contributed to give Philosophy the Form it hath taken since: For he it was that drew the first draught of Logick and Moral Philosophy,

sophy, and gave Principles to Natural Philosophy: But by prying into this, according to the quality of his wit, with too much quaintness, he refined every thing so much, that he handled these matters with less solidity than his Successors. Not, but that his judgment is also of great authority, when he affirms any thing; but his Sentiments are rather Principles than Decisions: and all things rightly considered, his Philosophy is more proper to overthrow than establish. He had moreover with his simplicity a great Soul; for *Lyfias* having read to him in his Prison a Discourse that he had made in his defence, he chose rather to dye than make use of it; because it defended him not with dignity enough: and so he dyed sedately and in cold blood, which amazed his Judges.

## VI.

## P L A T O.

*Plato* has the smoothest tongue of Antiquity, and takes pleasure to make men hear him attentively, though  
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he is not much concerned whether they believe him or not: he is always florid, but not always solid. The false relish that was then in vogue, through the credit of the Sophists, obliged him to that flourish of expression which he used. He is witty, quick, and elegant, and as ingenious as man can be; and with little coherence and method, he observes in his discourse a secret œconomy which fails not to hit the mark. And seeing he teaches only by way of Dialogue, that he may follow a free and disengaged stile, which has the air of Conversation; he is rich in Prefaces, and magnificent in his entry on Discourses; but he decides but little, no more than *Socrates*, and establishes almost nothing at all. However what he says is so naturally express'd, that nothing can be imagined more taking. The slight matters which he mingles with great in his discourses, and the trifles wherewith he circumstantiates what is essential and weighty in the subjects he treats of, render him alluring; and it is by that way alone that he amuses.

amuses. But through the great desire he hath to be pleasing, he is too much for telling of wonders: most part of his discourses are nothing else but Fables, Metaphors, and continual Allegories; he affects often to be mysterious in what he says, that he may keep himself the more within the verge of his Character; and it is commonly by lying that he undertakes to perswade truth. *Rhodiginus* pretends that his sense is more to be minded than his words, which are often allegorical. Moreover he was too much a Politician for a Philosopher: For in one of his Letters to *Dionysius* of *Siracusa* he acknowledges, that he published none of his Maxims, but under the name of *Socrates*, that he might not be accountable for his own Doctrine, in a time when the nicety of the People of *Athens* was offended at every thing. The condemnation of *Socrates* made him so cautious, that to be in good terms with the Publick, and to dispossess the People of the opinion, that he was addicted to the Sentiments of his Master,

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Master, he turned *Pythagorean*. Though he was a man of vast capacity, (for, *what did he not know*, says *Quintilian*?) and had a wonderful Genius for Sciences, whereof he speaks always better than others did; yet it must be acknowledged, that he gave greater reputation to Philosophy, by the conduct of his Life and Vertue, than by his Doctrine: For he it was that first taught, that true Philosophy consisted more in Fidelity, Constancy, Justice, Sincerity, and in the love of ones Duty, than in a great Capacity. After his death his Disciples so altered his Doctrine, and filled his School with such rigid Opinions, that scarcely could there be known amongst them the least print of the true Doctrine of *Plato*: which was divided into so many Sects, as there started up Philosophers in the Ages following.

VII.

*ARISTOTLE.*

*Aristotle* is a Wit so far above others, that few know him: For by an unparalleled

rallel'd reach of understanding he soars above the highest : He is an Eagle that mounts so high, that men easily lose sight of him ; and there is so much force in his thoughts, so great elevation in his sentiments, that he cannot be followed. He it was who first collected the several parts of Philosophy, that he might unite them into one body, and reduce them to a compleat Systeme. No man had ever so great a discerning of truth and falsehood, as that Philosopher ; for he not only dived into Reason, that he might discover it, under what cloud soever it hid it self ; but upon discovery thereof, had the art to make it even perceptible to others in all its force, and intelligible in its full extent : so happy and penetrating was his genius. By that quality of mind he became so exact an observer of the Works of Nature, that *Plato* called him, *the Genius of Nature*, as if Nature had made use of his Spirit as an instrument to discover her Secrets. In all his sentiments there sparkles a sage and judicious Character, which

which always satisfies the mind; so regular and solid he is: and there is hardly ever any thing said reasonably in Philosophy, which bears not some signature and impression of the spirit of *Aristotle*. So that all the Judgments that have been made on his Doctrine in succeeding Ages, have only differed according to the greatness and mediocrity of light and knowledge, that have swayed them: For in a word, none have given greater weight to humane Reason, nor carried it farther than *Aristotle*. His method is more solid than that of all others, because his principles are better founded on Reason, and his Reason more grounded on Experience. But when he speaks, one cannot tell whether it be to hide his doubts, or to make himself revered, that he is obscure. It seems he writes only that he may not be understood; and that his Works are not so much to instruct his own Age, as to give exercise to the following: Therefore it is, that *Diogenes Laertius* compares him to that Fish that troubles the

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Water for fear of being taken. But there is some Justice due to *Aristotle*, as to that reproach which is cast upon him: His obscurity is not so much the defect of his understanding, as of his subject matter; and in the manner how he fathoms things, it is not very easie to pierce the darkest clouds of Nature, to unfold her most hidden secrets, to dig into nothing but abysses, to walk only on precipices, not to pursue truth but by ways unknown to all other heads, and to be intelligible to all men: And that is the reason that the discourses of *Aristotle* have always more politeness and force than perspicuity; because he confines himself to a short and concise stile, the constraint whereof will not allow but a perplexed elocution: And that is also the reason that he writes in a manner more apt to amaze than persuade his Readers. One must have heard him, says *Psellus*, to be able to comprehend his Doctrine. He masked sometimes with an affected obscurity, what *Pythagoras* disguised under Symbols, and *Plato* under



under Allegories. But in fine, there is so great a depth of judgment to be found in all that *Aristotle* said, when one can penetrate into it, that he is not to be found fault with, if he have not always the art to make himself be understood. It is in vain therefore, that a brood of stunted spirits have let flye against the reputation of that great man, under the conduct of *Telesius*, *Patricius*, *Bacon*, *Campanella*, and some others, to discredit his Doctrine in these last Ages ; who by censuring *Aristotle* have pretended to be wiser than all the Ages and Nations that have esteemed him.

VIII.

Philosophy did shortly after degenerate from the Nobility of its Extraction, there being none in the following Ages that came near the knowledge of those great men who were its Founders ; and that purity which it preserved in its beginning, was quickly sullied by the multitude of Sects that sprang up since. Then began Philosophy to put on all the shapes and figures

which the passions of men gave it, according to the different inclinations and various interests that prevailed in succeeding Ages. For besides that the School of *Zeno* was full of counterfeit Vertues, and that of *Epicurus* stuffed with real Vices, Philosophy became impious under *Diagoras*, impudent under *Diogenes*, selfish under *Demochares*, censorious under *Lycos*, voluptuous under *Metrodorus*, fantastical under *Crates*, licentious under *Pyrrho*, litigious under *Cleantes*, turbulent under *Arcefilas*, and took the humour of a Buffoon under *Menippus*, and spirit of contradiction under *Lacydes*: In a word, it was abandoned to all the ramblings that the mind of man is capable of. The Philosophers themselves became jealous, envious, fickle, rash, unjust, passionate, and subject to the infirmities of the rest of Mankind. Then began men only to reason with reference to their humours, ambition, and intrigues: and in a short time, there was no foppery nor extravagancy, says *Cicero*, which had not some Philosopher

pher for Author and Patron. Men followed no more Reason but Passion; and made it their business more to maintain their Opinions with heats, than to defend the Truth with sincerity. The different interests of Sects who at that time laboured to overthrow one another, by the opposition that was amongst their Ring-leaders, did not a little contribute to that disorder. The ancient School of *Plato* degenerated by the Sentiments of the new, into the Sect of *Scepticks* and *Pyrrhonists*, who doubted of every thing. And after the death of *Theophrastus*, the School of the Peripatetics remitted much of their application to Natural Philosophy, that they might study Eloquence. And this was the revolution in Philosophy, which followed that of *Greece*: for since that it lost its liberty, under the Successors of *Alexander*, there arose but a few heads fit for the study of Nature, under the Reign of the *Ptolomies*, who called the Learned to *Alexandria*, and obliged them to leave *Greece*. Nei-

ther was there almost any other Philosopher of note in any other part of the world, except some followers of *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Zeno*, and *Epicurus*, who were in some vogue at *Athens*. The Learned that got greatest name elsewhere, were *Athenodorus* Keeper of the Library of the Kings of *Pergamus*, who corrected the Books of *Zeno*; *Strato* the Preceptor of *Ptolomy Philadelphus*; *Aristeas* that was sent by *Ptolomy* the Son of *Lagus* to *Eleazar* High Priest of *Jerusalem*; *Zoilus*, who made himself famous by his Criticisms on the Poems of *Homer*; *Nicander* the Physician of young *Attalus*, whose capacity *Quintilian* admires; *Eratosthenes*, whose Fragments are cited by *Plutarch*, *Athenaus*, *Diogenes Laertius*, and *Clement* of *Alexandria*; *Apollonius* of *Rhodes*, Library-Keeper to *Ptolomy Evergetes*; *Zenodotus* who flourished under *Ptolomy Soter*, and some others. The jealousy it self which arose between the Kings of *Alexandria* and *Pergamus*, upon the fanisie they took of raising Libraries, served only to discredit the Philosophy  
of

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of *Aristotle*; for the foolish emulation that these Princes had to make great Collections of Books, made them without distinction give considerable rewards to all who brought them in the Books of *Aristotle*, as *Galen* assures us; and upon that account, such was the industry of Booksellers, that forty Volumes of Analyticks bearing the name of *Aristotle* were collected, though he never composed but four: And that confusion was the cause that the interpreters of that Philosopher were so puzzled about the true distinction of his Books.

IX.

Philosophy was not known at *Rome*, till Civility had polished it. The three first Ages of that state were spent in the Conquest of *Italy*. Philosophy was then lookt upon as the Mother of laziness, which became odious in a Republick where every one was usefully employed, as appears in a Fragment of *Pacuvius*. The love of Letters came to *Rome* by the Commerce which they had with the *Grecians*. Then it was

that the *Romans* became the Scholars of those whose Masters they were. For the Study of Philosophy was revived again even in *Greece*, by the persecution of one of the *Ptolomy's*, who banished from *Alexandria* the Philosophers whom his Predecessors had called thither: The greatest part of whom returned to *Athens*, where the concurrence of the Learned gave new heat to Studies by a flight of Wits that there signalized their Capacitie: Amongst whom the chief were *Panetius* the Tutor of *Lelius* and *Scipio*, *Polybius*, *Carneades*, *Clitomachus*, *Apollonius Molo* Preceptor to *Julius Caesar* and *Cicero*, who by the noise of their fame drew to *Athens* the most flourishing Youth of *Rome*, for the study of Philosophy; and they occasioned even emulation among the *Romans*, who began to apply themselves thereto with earnestness. *Lucretius* was the first that wrote there of Philosophy, as he himself affirms. *Quintilian* makes mention of one *Varro* of *Gallia Narbonensis*, that wrote on that subject. *Terentius Varro*,  
whom

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whom *Salust* calls the learnedest of the *Romans*, was a great Philosopher. *Virgil* was also one of the first that was delighted with the study of the works of Nature. But no man in that time express'd so great love for Philosophy as *Cicero*; for he wrote several Treatises thereon, he explained to *Terentius Varro* the Doctrine of *Plato* and other Philosophers in his *Academicks*: he wrote of the Moral Philosophy of the *Stoicks* and *Epicureans* to *Brutus*: he made a Discourse to *Hortensius* to excite him to the love of Philosophy, whereof *St. Augustine* makes mention. He wrote to *Trebatius* the Book of Topicks, which is a kind of Logick. In fine, the troubles of the Republick encreasing daily, and Tyranny beginning to take rooting there, he retired into the Country, where he applyed himself so strenuously to the study of Philosophy, that in the opinion of *Plutarch*, he was prouder of being a Philosopher, than an Orator. *Brutus* likewise in imitation of *Cicero* wrote some Treatises of Philosophy, which are lost:  
And

And in this state was Philosophy at that time in *Rome*.

## X.

Furthermore the *Romans*, who made appear great solidity of wit in what they undertook, adhered to the Philosophy of the *Grecians*, and attempted not the invention of any new one; probably also, because their genius inclined them to Eloquence. However it be no partiality divided their minds into different Opinions: Gravity, which was the Character of their Nation, allowed not the weaknesses which spring from dispute and passion. Old *Cato* who naturally despised every thing that was not truly *Roman*, could not endure that they should learn any thing from the *Grecians*: That made him give his vote, that with all possible diligence the three *Grecian* Philosophers, *Carneades*, *Diogenes*, and *Critolaus*, deputed from *Greece* to the Senate, should be sent back again, for fear that the *Roman* Wits might be infected with their Opinions. And it is to this also, that the Oracle in the sixth  
Book



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Book of the *Aeneides* has a reference ;  
which says, that the *Grecians* were to  
be greater Orators and Philosophers  
than the *Romans* :

*Orabunt causas melius, cæliq; meatus*  
*Describent radio, & surgentia sidera*  
*dicent.*

As if Philosophy had not been altogether worthy of the Majesty of the Empire. This also *Horace* insinuates after his manner, by the biting raillery which he jeers all the Sects with in his Satyrs : And by the Character of *Offellus*, in whom he represents the mark of a *Roman* Philosopher, by praising in his person that grave, austere, and solid wisdom, which was perfected without any dependence on the Rules and Precepts which the *Grecians* so much esteemed.

*Offellus abnormis sapiens crassaq; mi-*  
*nerva.*

The *Grecians* were indeed more polish-  
ed

ed and formal in all their ways of carriage than the *Romans*: but their manners were not altogether so pure. This is the Idea that *Quintilian* formed of both. *Cicero* who understood the Opinions of all the Philosophers, addicted not himself to any. Young *Cato* was a Stoick meerly by Constitution. *Caesar* was a great Dialectician, eager in the pursuit of the knowledge of Nature, as he is represented by *Lucan*; but *Epicurean* as to his Morals, as well as *Pomponius Atticus*. *Horace* was one of the Libertines in Philosophy, who agreed with all Sects, and was of none. That was commonly his Sect which suited best with his Affairs: For he changed and altered them as men change their humour: And so much he professed himself.

## XI.

That smack of Philosophy, which common sense and sound judgment that then reigned seasoned *Rome* with, continued still under *Augustus*, a Prince of an even and solid wit. He had able Masters, as *Suetonius* saith; and by his.

his Philosophy he reigned with tranquillity enough, considering the violent Revolution that the Empire suffered at that time. There was hatched at *Rome* during his Reign a new Sect of Philosophers, whereof *Potamon* of *Alexandria* was the Founder. That Philosopher picked out all that was rational in the Doctrine of the other Philosophers, that he might compile it into a Systeme; and therefore he called his Sect, the Sect of *Eclecticks*. It had scarcely any followers but amongst the Christians, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* assures us. The Tyranny that under *Tiberius* and his Successors, began to domineer even over the minds and sentiments of men, changed the countenance of Philosophy, aswell as of the Government and Affairs. Most part of the persons of Quality became Stoicks, that they might have a Character of steadfastness against the violences of *Tiberius*. So that bad fortune and disgrace made more Philosophers, than the School or Closet; and men by being unfortunate became wise.

*Cali-*

*Caligula*, *Nero*, and *Domitian* banished the Philosophers from *Rome*: and *Nero* by a fantastical appetite to Philosophy, sent for Magician Philosophers from *Arabia*, to refine what he had learnt from *Seneca*. *Seneca* himself was a better Courtier than Philosopher; his Morality was severe, but his Doctrine not very exact, as *Quintilian* observes. The truth is, Philosophy was in no great esteem in that time, wherein all things went by favour and complaisance; mens care was only how to please and flatter the Emperours, and true merit being shut up in secret and in silence stirred not abroad. Philosophers were not now distinguished by Vertue and Doctrine, but by Habit and Grimaces; which were made use of to impose on the Publick, by disguising their real Conduct. In fine, men became Philosophers by the Beard, when they left off to be so by Manners. As it appears by the accident that some time after happened to *Herodes Atticus*; A thing like a man wrapped up in a Cloak, with a long

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long Beard, presented it self to him: What art, said he? A Philosopher, reply'd arrogantly the Fellow. *I see, (said Herodes) the Cloak and Beard of a Philosopher; but the Philosopher I see not yet.*

### XII.

The Study of Philosophy, which was grown contemptible under the first Emperours, through intrigue and policy which the Revolution of the State, and the weakness of new Government produced, began to flourish under the Emperour *Adrian*, and his Successors, in such a manner, that these Princes themselves were proud of being Philosophers; and were pleased when they were flattered to be complemented with that new Title. As it happened to *Marcus Aurelius* and *Commodus*, when *Athenagoras* and *St. Justin*, who were deputed by the *Grecian* Churches, to inform them of the Christian Religion, made their Harangues to them. *Trajan* who by his wit and inclination was already become favourable to Learning; the Natural History  
of

of *Pliny*, which was published in the time of *Vespasian*, and the Discourses of *Dion Chrysostom*, who composed Treatises of Moral and Natural Philosophy, contributed to the reviving of that Spirit; which *Plutarch*, one of the wisest and most judicious Philosophers that ever was, inspired into the Emperour *Adrian*, whose Preceptor he was, as he had before done to *Trajan*; and his Works which were at the same time so favourably received of the publick, renewed in men a relish of Philosophy: Wherein he was well seconded by *Favorinus*, Secretary to the Emperour, who by his Writings gave his Master jealousy; of whom *Diogenes Laertius* speaks so often, with an honourable Character. That love of Philosophy which *Adrian* re-established at *Alexandria*, by the Learned whom he sent thither, continued under his Successors, by the cares of *Epictetus*; who having withdrawn from *Rome*, for the horror which he conceived of *Domitian's* Reign, returned again in the time of *Antonine*, to whom he was Preceptor;

ceptor; by the Writings of *Arrianus* his Scholar, Preceptor to *Antoninus Pius*; by the Works of *Galen*, Physician to the Emperours, and the finest Wit of those times; by those of *Dio- genes Laertius*, *Herodes Atticus* the Disciple of *Favorinus*, *Pausanias*, *Aulus Gellius*, *Ptolomy* that famous Astronomer, *Maximus* of *Tyre*, one of the Preceptors of *Marcus Anrelius*, and of many other Learned men that followed them; as of *Taurus* of *Berytus*, *Athenaus*, *Alexander Aphrodisens*, *Philost- rat*, *Plotinus*, *Apuleius* and *Porphyrius*; who being encouraged by the Example of Emperours, in these and the following Ages, revived the love of Philosophy by their learned Works. In fine, it seems that the study of Truth began to be more valuable in a time, when the Oracles themselves began to lye. And Philosophy was so much in fashion in the time of *Lucian*, that he undertook in several parts of his Works to render Philosophers ridiculous, and chiefly in the Dialogues of the Battel of the *Lapishes*, the *Sycophant* —,

*Icaromenippus*, the *Gynick* and *Fugitives*, the nipping Jests that he puts upon them on all occasions in imitation of *Cratinus* and *Aristophanes*, who play upon *Pythagoras* and *Socrates*, do sufficiently evidence, that the opinion wherein they were held at that time, gave ground to raillery. The truth is, there was so counterfeited an outside in that Profession, and the name of *Philosopher* was so horribly abused, that that Author who set up for the publick Censurer of the Manners of his time, had reason to make it one of the principal subjects of his Satyr.

## XIII.

But that Divine Philosophy which descended from Heaven, by the birth of JESUS CHRIST, being spread abroad in the world by the Doctrine and exemplary life of Christians, Pagan Philosophy began to appear to men very frivolous; especially when they came to understand what was that Supreme Good, about which men had for so many Ages disputed in vain: and after that all-cœlestial Morality



lity of the Gospel, wherein all the Wisdom of God appeared to be comprised, had been published in the world, it filled the minds of the Pagans with jealousy. For *S. Paul* having been desirous to speak before the *Arcopage* of the Immortality of the Soul, and the resurrection of the Body, as of an indubitable truth, he was treated there with scorn and contempt, by the Philosophers who were then at *Athens*, who endeavoured to make him pass for a Babler. The spirit of Vanity and Pride, which reigned most in the Heathen Philosophy, obliged that Apostle to discredit it, by the advice he gave the *Colossians*, to take heed lest they should be misled by the vain reasonings of Philosophers. Emulation encreased still more in succeeding times: For *S. Austin*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*, and *Eusebius* employed all the force of their Eloquence, and all the ardour of their Zeal, to decry the foolish wisdom of Paganism: As the Heathens on the other hand began to declaim against our Religion, whereof

*Lucian* had the impudence to call the Author a Sophist, and Christians ignorant People; and *Octavian* in *Minutius Felix* reproached them for being wholly destitute of Learning. *S. Augustine* in one of his Works refutes these Calumnies with all the vehemence he could. But because at that time the Miracles wrought by Christians did much authorise their Doctrine, the Pagans had their recourse to Magick and Enchantments, to keep up their credit by such wicked Practices, when the usual ways failed them. That abominable fancy to Magick, had before that its beginning in those who made profession of Philosophy, under the first Emperours, by means of *Anaxilaus* and *Nigidius Figulus*, both *Pythagoreans*, whom *Augustus* banished, and of the Magician Philosophers whom *Nero* sent for from *Arabia*. It redoubled under *Domitian* by the impostures of *Apollonius Thyaneus*, of whom *Hierocles* composed a Book, comparing his Miracles to the Miracles of J E S U S C H R I S T; and whose  
Life

Life *Philostatus* wrote on the same design; as *Eunapius* wrote the Lives of the Sophists, who were almost all Magicians, that he might oppose them to the life of Christians; because they gained the admiration of people, by their Vertue and Miracles which they wrought. The fancy to so detestable a Philosophy was encreased by the Doctrine of *Pythagoras*, which was at that time in fashion, and whereof the followers became Necromancers, as appears by the reproach that *Lucian* casts on them in one of his Dialogues. But nothing gave so great a current to so idle a Philosophy, as the freakishness of the Emperour *Julian*, who giving his mind to all the horrid absurdities which the extravagance of his curiosity suggested to him, made an execrable mixture of what was holy in our Religion with the impieties of Paganism, that he might shape to himself an abominable Philosophy. And most part of the Philosophers of that time were Magicians, to please the Emperour: Which appeared since in *Apuleius*

*leius* a *Platonick* Philosopher, who being accused of Magick by the Magistrates, defended himself no otherwise, than by a pretended connexion, which he alledged, of Philosophy with natural Magick. That abomination, which continued in the study of Philosophy until the time of *Boetius*, and whereof he purges himself, gave ground to the first beginnings of Cabalistical Philosophy and Chymistry, as *Delrio* assures us.

## XIV.

By how much the Heathen Philosophy fell into extravagancy, by all these excesses; so much that of Christians continued to advance to perfection in the search of Truth, as well by the purity of its Doctrine, as the integrity of their Manners. It is reported, that *Solon* travelling in *Egypt* found there a Philosopher of the Country, who told him with a certain air of Authority, *The Grecians, Solon, are but Children.* Which happened to be but too true, in regard of the Heathens, when Christian Philosophy began to spread abroad

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its light into the world: because humane Reason appeared in all its weakness, before the beams of that divine brightness of Faith. But they who brought Philosophy in greatest vogue among the Christians, whether by their works, or the publick profession they made thereof, were *Aristides*, one of the most learned of those that flourished at *Alexandria* under the Emperour *Adrian*, *Justin Martyr*, *Tatian*, *Athenagoras*, *Bardefanes*, *Athenogenes*, *Apollinaris* Bishop of *Hieropolis*, *Melito* Bishop of *Sardis*, *S. Irenaus* whom *Tertullian* calls a man versed in all Sciences; *Tertullian* himself, who was obliged to study Philosophy to defend Religion, which in the minds of the Pagans passed for a Sect of Philosophy; *Panthenus*, who explained the Catechism to Christians in the School of *Alexandria*; *Clement* his Scholar, who having, through *Greece* and *Egypt*, in vain sought the wisdom of this world, learnt the wisdom of Heaven, in the School of blessed *Panthenus*; to whose place he succeeded in that fa-

mous Chair of the Christian Schools ; *Origen*, who succeeded to *Clement*, and who, that he might refute the Philosopher *Celsus*, learned all the Opinions that were taught at that time ; *Lactantius*, who was ignorant of nothing of all the Sects of Philosophers ; *Arnobius*, who with so great judgment wrote against the Gentiles ; *S. Gregory Nazianzen*, of whom *Eusebius* speaks with so many Elogies ; *Ammonius*, who was esteemed by the Pagan Philosophers, and who was the first that taught Christians the Philosophy of *Aristotle*. To these great men, may be added *S. Basil*, who was the greatest Dialectician of his time, in the opinion of *Gregory Thaumaturgus* ; *S. Chrysostom*, who became as great a Philosopher as he was an Orator ; *S. Augustine*, who, besides the three Books he wrote against the *Platonicks*, made a Treatise of Dialectick, which is to be found in the first Volume of his Works. I could name a great many more, who adorned that time with the lustre of their knowledge, authorising the Religion which

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which they preached by the purity of their lives, and making the dryest Thorns of Philosophy fructifie by the sacred streams of their Doctrine.

XV.

From this Sun-shine of Philosophy which at that time appeared, by the emulation of the Christians and Pagans, men fell since into a gross air of barbarity and ignorance, which cannot be sufficiently lamented. It was in those wretched times, when the *Huns, Vandals, Goths, and Longobards* broke in upon *Italy*. That disorder began by the burning of the Bibliothek of the Emperours, which happened at *Constantinople*, under the Empire of *Zeno*; wherein Philosophy and the other Sciences were much concerned, by the loss of more than sixscore thousand Volumes. The *Arabians* having rendred themselves Masters of the world, by their Conquests in the following Ages, made a kind of revolution in Learning aswell as in the Empire. The nature of their genius, which was subtil, plodding, and profound,  
and

and tied them too literally to the Text of *Aristotle*, made them follow a kind of abstract reasoning, which did somewhat deviate from the solidity of the *Greeks* and *Latines*; and though there appeared much subtilty in that way, yet it must be acknowledged, that that new strain of Reason seemed false, by the mistakes whereinto *Avicenna*, *Alkindus*, *Algazel*, *Averroes*, *Alpharabius*, *Albohasen*, and some others fell, of whom *Possevin* in the third Book of his *Bibliotheca* relates the Errours to an enormous number. *Ludovicus Vives* speaking of the Metaphysicks of *Avicenna*, and the Philosophy of *Averroes*, pretends that both look like the raveries of a wandering imagination, and the Visions of the Alcoran. And *Thomas Aquinas* in one of his *Opuscles* says, that *Averroes* was not so much a follower of *Aristotle*, which he professes, as a corrupter of his Doctrine. But besides that, under the *Arabians* Philosophy became nice and full of quirks, by these precisions and abstracted Notions which it introduced  
into



into the Schools : It became also wholly barbarous in its expressions ; Reason, if I may so say, having unlearned to shew it self under rational terms. It must be granted however, that the *Arabians*, by the quality of their genius, and through the leisure which the prosperity of their Arms and Plenty afforded them, did so apply themselves to the study of the Mathematicks and Philosophy, that they became in that time the learnedest men in the world. And *Averroes* by the depth of his plodding genius, and the study of *Aristotle*, deserved to be called his Commentator, and founded a Sect of Philosophers under his own name ; who opposed themselves to *Aphrodisens*, *Philoponus*, and the rest of the *Grecians*. Nevertheless as *Averroes* understood not *Aristotle* but by a Translation not very exact, he fell himself into so horrible perversions of his sense, that *Bagolinus* a Philosopher of *Verona*, *Zimara*, and *Mantinus* in vain assayed to correct him. For *Vives* sayes, that he read only a base Latin Translation of  
the

the Text of *Aristotle*, whereof he made another into *Arabick* still worse. The truth is, that besides the unfaithful Copies, which the *Arabians* had of *Aristotle's* Text, as *Vives* and *Possevin* assures us, it is thought, that the *Genius* of the *Arabian* Language is so different from the *Greek* Tongue, that the one can hardly exhaust the sense of the other, to make a Faithful Translation: for with some proportion it may be said of all the rest of the *Arabians*, what *Calius Rhodiginus* sayes of *Avicenna*, *Avicenna lingua græcæ ignarus cum libros Aristotelis mutilos perversosq; legeret, autorem eminentissimum minus consequi potuit.* *Picus Mirandula* sayes, that *Averroes* stuck to the study of *Aristotle*, and *Avicenna* to *Plato*, which occasioned the Opposition of Opinions that are to be found betwixt them. After all, they were both great Men, and of extraordinary esteem amongst the Learned.

## XVI.

The School-men, who all addicted themselves to the Doctrine of *Aristotle*,  
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and formed their minds by the study of the *Arabians*, from whom they took that subtle and nice Spirit, which since slipt into the Schools, made the last Sect of Philosophers, which hath been in any reputation. *Thomas Aquinas* is pretended to have been the founder of that Sect, for having read *Aristotle* in a Translation of *Averroes* made by a *Spaniard*, he took from it the Method, which *Lanfranc* Archbishop of *Canterbury*, *Gilbert Porretain* Bishop of *Poitiers*, *Abelard*, and *Peter Lombard*, had already rough-hewn upon the Idea that *Damasceus* had framed thereof: and whereof *Peter Comestor* composed the first Elements, for they were great Dialecticians. *Danaus* in his *Prolegomena* upon the first of the Sentences, hath written the beginnings of the Scholastick Philosophy, which may be said to have had three different periods, as is reported of the School of *Plato*; the ancient, the middle and the new Scholastick. The first, which had it's beginning under the Archbishop of *Canterbury*,

terbury, or to say better, under *Peter Lombard*, lasted almost two hundred years, and ended under *Albertus Magnus*. *Lombard* soiled much the purity of Theology, by many unprofitable questions, wherewith he perplexed it. *Alexander Alesius* was the most considerable of these first School-men. The second began with *Albertus Magnus*, Bishop of *Ratisbonne*, the vastest Genius of these Ages, in the Judgment of *Trithemius*, and continued until *Durandus*: and during that space of about an hundred years, the Doctrine of *Aristotle* was raised to the highest pitch of its reputation, by the vogue that *Thomas Aquinas* and *John Duns* a Scottish-man gave it. These were the two Spirits of greatest capacity for Philosophy in these last Ages. No Man ever reasoned with more justness and exactness than *Thomas Aquinas*: Solidity was his chief character, as subtilty that of *Scotus*. They both made themselves so famous by their learning, that they became the heads of two the most celebrated Sects that ever were ;  
and

and had it not been for the misery of their times, wherein barbarity reigned, they would have been comparable to the greatest Philosophers of Antiquity. The third Age of School-Philosophy began with *Durandus*, who to get reputation, did rise against *Thomas Aquinas*, but with little success, and lasted till *Gabriel Biel a German*, the compiler of other Philosophers, who expressed ill, what he conceived indifferently well; for there is a dulness in his expression, that renders him dry and harsh. Then did the Wits subtilize more and more by an emulation of being Nominalists or Realists. *Ocham* was the chief of the Nominalists, who taught that Beings Universal were but words, and *Scotus* leader of the Realists, who taught that the same Universal beings were real things. And as that age was infected with that naughty air which corrupted the Schools; so the animosity of these two Sects hurried mens minds into such extremities, as cannot be parallell'd in antiquity; for in *Germany* they waged  
such

such War together, as broke sometimes out into extravagancy and rage. It was no more disputing in the Universities, but downright fighting, and opinions were only defended by violence. Then it was that Philosophy was wholly taken up about the operations of the mind, conceptions, and precisions: the wits drained their reasons with frivolous questions: Men fell into heats for bare and pure formalities, raised to themselves Phantasms, and Disputations; Reason became litigious and trickish to maintain it self, and truth was almost nothing else but the price of the dispute. This was called Wit, but was it so? In this method were composed heaps of idle Books and Opinions, which stifled all that remained of a good relish for Letters. Nevertheless, that Scholastick Air, how dry soever it was, appeared most solid and proper to overthrow falshood: error and imposture could not endure its splendour, and the sharpness, animositie, and passion, which was then to be found in disputes,

was

was not so much the fault of the Schools, as of those that abused them.

XVII.

There were notwithstanding in these Ages three Philosophers, who by a spirit of novelty took their flight out of the Schools, and devised a method quite different from what was in use: these were *Reymund Lully*, *Cardan*, and *Paracellus*, who with very different Notions were all three of a Character not much different. *Reymund Lully* by the commerce which he entertained with the *Arabians*, became very skillful in Medicine, Natural Philosophy and Astronomy: And of these three Sciences he made a fourth, the Art of Chymistry, whereof in *Spain* and *Italy* he was the Restorer. He endeavoured to overturn the order established in the Schools, by reducing Philosophy and other Sciences to a method, that has nothing of solidity, and which is so far from making men learned, that it could never make one reasonable. *Cardan* is a vast and irregular head that offers at all without distinction; and

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fixes

fixes on nothing: What he says himself of his familiar spirit, which he believes to be made up of *Saturn* and *Mercury* is so foolish, that one cannot read him in cold blood without laughter: And what he adds elsewhere, that that spirit did not communicate it self to him but in dreams, is still more extravagant. It is he who hath in these last Ages revived all that secret Philosophy of the Cabal and Cabalists, which fills the world with spirits, to which he pretends that men may become like, purifying themselves by Philosophy. But *Paracelsus* who had the air more of an Operator than Philosopher, is the most extravagant of all: For he fancied to himself to make a new Philosophy, a new art of Medicine, and a new Religion; of his own head making himself, by a ridiculous neutrality, the Mediator between the Pope and *Luther*, that he might bring them both to his Maxims. *Gohory* was his first Follower in *France*, a very superficial Naturalist, but a great Distiller. *Paracelsus* had a deep wit, a dull  
and



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and obscure expression ; all his words were Riddles, and his discourses Mysteries. *Rullandus* a German Physician made a Dictionary of his terms, with which one cannot yet understand him. *Paracelsus* re-established Chymistry in Germany: The Emperour *Charles* the Fifth heard him ; but upon the proposition that he made to enrich him by Chymistry, called him an Enthusiast. To these three Philosophers may be added *Cornelius Agrippa*, *Arnoldus de villa nova*, *Peter* of *Apono*, *Bacon*, and some other Cabalists, of whom *Agrippa* himself speaks in his Epistle to the Abbot *Trithemius*. But all that Philosophy can serve for no other end, but to lead men into extravagancy and illusion ; because it seems to disguise under the veil of Natural Knowledge, what is most black and horrid in Magick. About that time *Reuchlin* endeavoured to revive in Germany the Philosophy of *Pythagoras*, as *Marcilius Ficinus* had in Italy re-established the Doctrine of *Plato*. These were the Distempers of those Ages: Of

which the different tastes for Philosophy, the diversity of sentiments, and the instability of spirits that is to be seen at that time, shews sufficiently the weakness.

## XVIII.

In fine, seeing the love of Learning, and especially of Philosophy, became confined to *Europe*, the different Nations thereof applyed themselves variously to it, according to the diversity of their genius's and inclinations. The *Spaniards* according to the Character of their Wits, cut out for Dialectick and Reflexions, became subtle in their Reasonings, Formalists and Metaphysicians. The *Italians* took a more agreeable air, they grew for most part curious in lovely Ideas; the Works of *Triphus* one of the learned of the last Ages, inspired into them love for the Philosophy of *Aristotle*; and the Books of Cardinal *Bessarion* and *Marcilius Ficinus* gave them an inclination for the Philosophy of *Plato*, to which they accommodated themselves better than other Nations, by the quality of their  
fine

fine genius, naturally quick but lazie. The *French*, who found themselves capable of all Sciences, embraced all; and by that Character of Capacity and Curiosity, copied what they found good amongst other Nations, and succeeded in every thing. The *English*, by that depth of Wit which is common to their Nation, loved the Methods that were profound, abstruse, and far-sought; and by a head-strong application to labour, set themselves to the observation of Nature more than other Nations: as appears by the Works which they have published. The *Germans*, by the necessity which the Climat imposed upon them to keep themselves by the fire, and by the conveniency of their Stoves, addicted themselves to Chymistry; as did other Northern people: So that the Southern Countries contributed to make Philosophy profound and subtle, and the Northern to render it laborious and mechanical. And of all the modern Philosophers, those that have made greatest noise, are *Galileus* an *Italian*,

*Bacon*, *Hobbes*, and *Boile* English, *Gas- sendus* and *Descartes* French, and *Van- helmont* Dutch-man. *Galileus* seems to be the most ingenious of all; and he I think may be called the Father of Modern Philosophy. His Method resembles much that of the *Platonists*, his Stile is pleasant; and by his manner of Writing he conceals many defects: though he hath copied many things from the Primitive Philosophers, yet all seems to be his own, and he is taken for the original in several places, where he is but the transcriber. *Bacon* has a ranging wit which dives not deep into any thing; his too great reach hinders him from being exact, the most part of his sentiments are rather Overtures for meditation, than Maxims to be followed: His Opinions are somewhat subtile and sparkling; and if they be rightly considered, they resemble more sparks of fire, than an entire and natural light. *Hobbes* is obscure without delight; singular in his Notions, learned, but not very solid, and inconstant in his Doctrine; for  
he

he is sometimes *Epicurean*, sometimes *Peripatetick*. *Boile* is exact in his Observations ; no man in *Europe* hath enriched Philosophy with so many Experiments as he ; he reasons upon his Experiments with indifferent good consequence, which after all are not always unquestionable ; because his principles are not always certain : he is in a word, an able Philosopher and great Naturalist. *Gassendus*, who desired only to pass for the Restorer of the Philosophy of *Democritus* and *Epicurus*, speaks little of his own head ; there is nothing almost in him but the beauty of stile, that may give him the credit of an admirable Author : To refute his Natural Philosophy there needs no more but the Arguments of *Aristotle* against *Democritus* and his Disciples. *Descartes* is one of the most extraordinary genius's that hath appeared in these last times ; one of a fertile wit and profound meditation : the concatenation of his Doctrine reaches his point, the order of it is well devised according to his principles ; and his

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Systeme, though made up of the ancient and modern, is well digested. The truth is, he teaches men too much to doubt, and that is no good model for spirits naturally incredulous: but in fine, he is more original than others. *Vanhelmont*, through the knowledge which he had of Nature after his way, performed such prodigious things by his Remedies, that he was put into the Inquisition, upon suspicion that what he did was above the power of Nature. In a word, *Galileus* is the most agreeable of the Moderns; *Bacon* the most subtle, *Gassendus* the most learned, *Hobbes* the most plodding and thoughtful, *Boile* the most curious, *Descartes* the most ingenious, and *Vanhelmont* the greatest Naturalist, but too much wedded to *Paracelsus*. The most universal method of his Philosophy, is the sympathy and antipathy of Simples and mixt Bodies, which he well understood.

## XIX.

Upon the retail of all these notions of Ancient and Modern Philosophy, and upon

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upon the different character of both, this comparison may be made. The Ancient Philosophy is more founded on authority, and the Modern on experience ; the Ancient is simple and natural, the Modern artificial and elaborate ; the former is more modest and grave, the latter more imperious and pedantick. The ancient is peaceable and calm ; for it was so far from disputing, that it would have the minds of Youth prepared by the Mathematicks, that they might be accustomed to submit to demonstration without hesitation : the modern is of a strain of disputing of every thing, and of training up Youth to noise and the tumult of the School. The Ancient inquires only into truth out of a sincere desire to find it : the Modern takes pleasure to dispute it, even when it is discovered. The one advances more securely in its method, because it hath alwayes the Metaphysicks for a guide : the other is unsure in its steps when it is once deprived of that conduct. Constancy, Fidelity, sound Judgment, and Stedfastness

Stedfastness, was that which men called Philosophy in the dayes of *Plato*. And the dislike of businels, peevishness, the renouncing of pleasures when the use of them is lost through the extinction of passions, I know not what Authority that is derived from the Gray-beard, counterfeit audacity, phlegmatick fullness, moderation, and all that Wildom which springs from the weakness of Age and Constitution, is the Philosophy of a great many now-a-days. The Ancient is universally more learned, it aims at all : and the Modern confines it self to the sole consideration of nature, resting satisfied to be a mere Naturalist. In fine, the Ancient is more addicted to study, more laborious and indefatigable in what it undertakes ; for the Primitive Philosophers spent their lives in study : the Modern is less constant in its application, more superficial in its pains, and more precipitate in its studies. And this precipitation accustomes it by little and little to ground too easily, reasonings not very exact, upon uncertain  
rumours



rumours, testimonies of little credit, and upon experiments not well agreed upon. It pronounces boldly upon doubts and uncertainties, to satisfy in some manner the eagerness that it sometimes hath to vent its imaginations, and to give vogue to novelties: so that to make a decision between both, I am of the Opinion of that intelligent Philosopher of these last Ages, who all things being well considered was of the mind to stick to the Ancients, and leave the Moderns to themselves: for the plain common sense of the Primitive Philosophers, is preferable to all the art and quaintness of the new. But let us conclude without prejudice, that as from what Cloud soever the day breaks out, it should be accounted pleasant; so from what part soever truth comes, it ought to be esteemed. Let us no more distinguish ancient reason from new, because on what side soever we behold it, and what colour soever we give it, it is alwayes the same. And let us make this reflexion, that if there be some Opinions better received  
by

by the publick than others, it is but sometimes because their Cabals have been more powerful, or their Stars more favourable.

## X X.

There are therefore two extremities to be avoided, in the course that is to be held between the Ancient and Modern Philosophers. The first is of those who out of a good Opinion which they have of themselves, find nothing comparable to their own Age: the Zeal which they have to free themselves from the Tyranny, which the Authority of the Ancients have usurped over mens minds, is a false Zeal: that is the way to impose new Laws on Reason, under pretext of giving it liberty. And all these fair precepts which men give us to shake off the prejudices of Education, Custome, Authority, and to cure our selves of popular anticipations, are but Snares laid for our credulity: they speak to us only of liberty, to impose upon us a new Yoke. It is only to give to the Moderns, what Men would take from

from the Ancients ; and to destroy the credit of *Aristotle* to set up the reputation of *Descartes* : but is it just to despise those whom all antiquity have respected ? Tradition alone and the Universal Consent of all people, might oblige us to do Justice to those great Men, who have been the Founders of Sciences ; for the World is a great Assembly ; wherein every Age has its Vote ; and to know who is preferable in the Judgment we pass on men, we must look on those who have deserved from the Publick the most Universal Approbation. None but superficial minds can be pleased with Novelties. He that is solidly wise, is not surpris'd at the lustre of Novelty ; he adheres only to what is established by the suffrage of the Ancients, as the Prophet hath it. Is it possible that so many Ages, so many Great-Wits, so much Application, and so many Works, have been able to produce nothing that is tolerable, saith *Cicero* ? So that if we compare our selves with the great men of the first Ages, let us  
not

not decide rashly in our own favours : we are partial Judges, it is the part of posterity to give their verdict thereof. Let us but cast our eyes on the ages past, and that will teach us modesty. These great Men, besides the extraordinary *genius* they had for Sciences, spent their lives in continual pains, with a docility of Spirit without example. *Pythagoras* was a Schollar fifty years under the greatest Masters of the world. *Eusebius* sayes that *Democritus* studied fourscore years. *Parmenides* hid himself eighteen years in a Cave, there to meditate on Logick: *Plato* was the Disciple of *Socrates*, *Archytas* and *Eurytus*, above forty years. *Aristotle* studied under *Plato* more than twenty years. And shall we, forsooth, after two years slight study, under very ordinary Masters, pretend to compare with these great men !

## XXI.

The other extremity to be avoided is the pertinacious adhering to the Antients sometimes without Reason : Men make an Idol of their Authority by a  
blind

*Philosophy in general.* 63

blind prejudicated perswasion of their merit. Such was the head-strongness of *George of Trabifond*, who made a Book to prove the conformity of *Aristotle* with the holy Scriptures: and of *Marcellius Ficinus* who pretends that *Plato* knew the mystery of the Trinity. For which *Medina a Spanisb* Divine condemns him of boldness injurious to the purity of our Religion, which contains nothing but what is supernatural. *Hermolaus Barbarus* was yet more whimsical in his cleaving to the Doctrine of *Aristotle*: that learned man by an horrible Catastrophe of his Wits raised the Devil, that he might learn the true sense of *Aristotle*, about a Term which that Philosopher used, and whereof the signification seemed to him ambiguous. But the most fantastical of all, was the Emperour *Julian*; who, as *Ammianus Marcellinus* saith, debased the Grandeur of his Vertues, by playing the Philosopher: he was chaste, sober, just and vigilant; but by a ridiculous devotion to the Authority of the Ancient Philosophers

phers, he preferred the Doctrine of *Plato* to that which *St. Paul* taught the *Athenians*; and by a fearful rambling, he gave himself over to all the curiologies of an unsettled mind. The haughty wisdom of Paganism hindered him from submitting his reason to the wise follie of the Mystery of the Cross, which appeared to be beneath that Philosophy wherein he gloried: and because he made that Philosophy his Religion, so soon as he was Master of his Opinions, by becoming Master of the World, he renounced the Doctrine of JESUS CHRIST, that he might embrace that of *Pythagoras* and *Socrates*, whereby he laboured to gain an extravagant reputation among the Philosophers of his time; and by an abominable vanity, would acknowledge no Gods, but such as owed their Divinity to his grant: so much was his mind debauched by his stubborn adherence to the Ancients. There is therefore a mean to be observed between the Ancients and Moderns; these are to be respected without vilifying of those.

So

So let us endeavour to discover new Truths, and not neglect the Ancient. Let us not overthrow things established, to establish things that are uncertain: let us preserve our liberty, and let us not lose the use of our reason, by a blind adoration of the sentiments either of the Ancients or Moderns: let us do Justice to both; and let us value merit wherever it be, without minding whether it be old or new.

XXII.

But though a man may have his mind sufficiently armed against the prejudices which arise from the Authority of the Ancients, and the inclination which he may have to the Modern, yet hath he hardly ever the power to strip himself wholly of the natural love which he hath for his own opinions. That is one of the great infirmities of the mind of man; because self-love believes nothing to be so much its own as its Opinion: men look upon that as a Creature of their own, and renounce all other interests to maintain this. Men are even some-

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times

times so opinionative and obstinate in defending their own conceits, that they run upon strange extremities. The Disciples of *Plato* gave themselves, to be burnt for the Doctrine of their Master; and the Followers of *Hegesias* suffered themselves to dye of hunger, by sticking too closely to the Maxims of their School. *Socrates*, for all his wisdom, in cold blood gave his life to preserve his Opinion. And even in these last Ages there have been men so foolish, as to become the Martyrs of their Doctrine: For Errour hath its Votaries, stricter than those that Truth it self hath. Men have even sometimes a secret vanity to authorise by their suffrage, what is not warranted by Reason; and blindly embrace Principles which they understand not, and whereof they are only fond, because they are hard to be understood. These are the most common illusions of self-love, which how ridiculous soever it be in its other passions, yet is never so much, as in its obstinacy to maintain its Notions. And as nothing is more unreasonable



unreasonable than what it wills; so nothing is less maintainable than what it thinks. But the worst of extravagancies is, to be obdured against the torrent of publickly-received Opinions, and to admit of no other sentiments upon the subjects that are in hand, but a mans own private opinion: such men take pity to see others contrary to themselves in judgment, because they abound so much in their own sense, that they acknowledge no other: this is the Character of stunted minds. For in fine, the more merit there is stedfastly to maintain true Reason, when once it is known, the more there is of Vertue to forsake the wrong, when men are perswaded of its falshood. That is a magnanimous ingenuity, saith *Aristotle*: And it is a greatness of Soul to retain its full liberty, by maintaining of truth and renouncing falshood, according to the different views that one hath of both. Thus did *Hippocrates* acknowledge that he had been by false Principles sometime mistaken in his Reasonings. So great

modesty could not proceed but from a great capacity : and it is always a mark of judgment, to doubt of its own sufficiency.

## XXIII.

It is great knowledge to judge of things, according to the different degrees of certainty that they may have, to clear the truth of appearances; to take that for Opinion, which is only but Opinion, and so to distinguish Judgments as one may give sound Judgment of every thing. For the disorders which slip into the mind, by the various sentiments that pass in publick, spring from this confusion of discerning. For example, *Copernicus* shuts himself up in his Closet, that he may frame a new Systeme of the World : he revives the Opinion of that *Nicetas* of *Syracusa*, who taught that there was nothing in nature at rest, but the Sun. He beats his brains to frame a new Opinion according to his fancy, and there is nothing better devised than that Hypothesis : however, would it be reasonable to make the Opinion

pinion of that great man pass for a demonstration? and without consulting the Universal consent of so many Ages, who have gone before us, and who are of a contrary Opinion. Would it be just to oblige all the World to be governed according to the imagination of *Copernicus*, and to make a private mans sentiment a Law to all the rest of mankind? *Descartes* erects a new natural Philosophy, upon principles that are not altogether new. He calls his own Systeme himself a Chimera; for in that manner he discoursed with his confidants, naming his Philosophy a *Romance*: and men would have me espouse the Opinions, that he laughs at; is that reasonable? I confess, I admire his Ideas, but am not so submissive as to think them unquestionable: and so I return to my principle, which ought to be the rule of all the reasonings in Philosophy, that one must be frugal of his belief, that he may employ it, according to the different degrees of certainty which he finds in the matters he examines; to the end that he may take nothing for a truth but what is true,

and think that only probable which is probable. In that consists all the prudence of the Wise-man, saith *Epicurus* in *Cicero* : and it is a bad Character to act in an other manner ; for things are often otherwayes than they appear, by the Opinion and Notion that men frame of them.

## XXIV.

They are but false measures and deceitful notices, that make men deviate from the common ways of Philosophy, to search out extraordinary paths : and it is always a sign of a depraved taste in Sciences not to love what is commonly received by all the World : one is subject to wander, when he follows by-ways. It is even convenient in the conduct of life, to adhere only to common Opinions : otherways a man exposes himself to great absurdities. *Alexander* for all his valour, having failed in this principle, became worthy of contempt : He wept , says *Plutarch*, because following the Opinion of *Democritus* , who made many Worlds, he had not as yet conquered the half of  
one ;

one. That greatness of soul which he makes appear by so noble a sentiment becomes ridiculous, saith *Eliaſus*; for it is grounded on a false Foundation. So would a Magistrate, whose Life ought to serve as a Model in a well-ordered State, be of little Judgment in the mind of *Cicero*, if in his conduct he followed the Opinion of *Epicurus*: and if instead of being severe, he made appear easiness in his sentiments; for all the Counsels of a publick person ought to be austere, to hold every one to his duty. To what purpose is it to prescribe rules to others to live in order, if he himself be irregular? *If we did follow*, sayes that Orator, *in our O-rations these singular Opinions of the Stoicks, who eye Glory and Ignominy after another manner than other people doe; because they are not affected with either of the two: and if we would propose to the publick the opinion which the Porch teacheth of Vertue and Vice, Good and Evil, no body would listen to us.* And there is nothing more absurd, than the way that *Cicero* brings in *Tor-*

*quatus* speaking in the Senate, upon the principles of *Epicurus*, whose Doctrine he followed. There is in that discourse some quaint and delicate touches of Raillery: that Orator seems delighted to declame against all other Philosophies, but that which was in use, judging nothing more opposite than that to true eloquence. It was that likewise which hindred *Demosthenes* from embrace any Party, amidst the many Sects which in his time sprung up at *Athens*; that he might not wander from the usual sentiments and common ways, which are fittest to perswade. And for all that *Julius Caesar* was so ambitious to be a great Philosopher, yet he made it his only business to become popular, that he might the better gain upon the minds of the people. In fine, what ever men say, one can hardly retain the Character of a wise-man, in deviating from the common opinions, nor of a publick spirit by embracing private sentiments. And to extend this to all Professions, how should a Poet be laughed at, who, following the opinion of *Copernicus*,  
would

would make the Earth turn round the Sun: or who, according to the System of *Descartes*, should never speak of Stars or Constellations, without speaking of whirlings and of subtile matter? how ridiculous should one be, what wit soever he might have, with so dainty principles!

XXV.

Nevertheless there is nothing nowadays more in use with Philosophers, and nothing bears greater rule than that kind of humour: For men seek only to set off their parts by new and extraordinary sentiments, and leave the way of common sense because it is too much beaten. When one has got a more working brain than others, he falls on a fanſie of speaking that which other men never said. This whimsicalness, as *Cicero* says, made *Arceſilas* be taken for a seditious person, who overthrew the old Academy, to erect a new one. And *Ramus*, by that humour in these last Ages, was like to have destroyed the University of *Paris*: For, that he might confute the false *Peripateticks*,

*seticks*, he attacked the true; and to restore the Schools to peace, he became their disturber: He was a learned man, bold to decide; but naturally troublesome: he only imitated *Laurentius Valla* and *Ludovicus Vives*, two great Criticks in the former Age, that he might set up for an Innovator. In fine, men often dispute thus, only that by a fanfic of innovation they may overthrow what is best established. When men have not the power to make new Opinions, they find a way to give a new garb to the ancient; and that they may pass for Authors at any rate, begin the change of sentiments by the change of language: Men give new names, as *Zeno* did heretofore, to Opinions which are not new: and what do they not to speak in a different strain from others, and to gain reputation at any rate whatsoever? But seeing the libertinage of sentiments proceeds from the licentiousness of manners, the mind stands in need of barriers to keep it within bounds. Religion, Laws, Custom, Educa-



Education, Punishments and Rewards, ought to serve it for a Bridle when it begins to ramble ; yet sometimes it revolts against all these : and when it hath once cast off the yoke, and runs out beyond the common Opinions, there is no kind of extravagancy that comes amiss to it. This makes Laws necessary : For Civil Authority ought to have a hand in regulating the sentiments of men whose minds are naturally extravagant.

XXVI.

There are some minds naturally free in their sentiments, and others born slaves : The one sway the others by an ascendant of birth, and the others suffer themselves to be governed through a weakness of wit ; they are so dependent through the quality of their genius, that they are only fit to receive the impressions that are given them, and to follow the motions that others inspire into them. From this defect and weakness have sprung the different Sects of Philosophers : For as there are some so bold as to raise themselves above

bove others, there are likewise many so timorous and dependent, as to submit to them, and to entertain no opinion nor sentiment, but with a dependance on their Masters. There are also some minds so light and credulous, and who so freely resign themselves, that the raveries of other men guide their reason and conduct: the spirit of bondage extends it self even to their hearts and thoughts, because they are too weak to retain the liberty of chusing sentiments of their own. But what is more strange, there are sometimes obscure and sullen spirits, whose notions are naturally perplexed and confused, and yet are listened to like Oracles; and who gain a kind of Empire over mens minds, and no body can tell wherefore; unless it be that they are bolder and more positive in their decisions than others: and such blades procure authority only by presumption and boldness. This was the way that *Paracelsus* got into vogue in the last Age: his affected obscurity made him considerable: his credit was  
built

built particularly on this, that he spake not like other men, and that no body understood him: his confidence in playing the Master without Reason, won him disciples, and by that means his Doctrine received a mysterious air, which raised him Followers. It is partly by that way also that *Descartes* has got reputation: the entangled answers which he makes to the difficulties that he forms to himself, are always new difficulties which busie the Reader: men take pleasure to see themselves led from obscurity to obscurity, without knowing whither they are going. Yet that Author does please by that art, because it is thereby that he seems oraculous. His Interpreter that endeavoured to render him more intelligible, by a new explication of his Natural Philosophy which he published lately, hath robbed it of part of its beauty, by putting it in a plainer dress. Nothing seems to give so great satisfaction in that admirable piece, as the trouble there is to understand it. That obscure stile has somewhat more mysterious

sterious: the quality of being incomprehensible is a great charm to his Disciples, who admire him more for that, than for any thing besides. And that obscurity is an art which some men employ, and wherewith our blockishness is satisfied.

## XXVII.

Subtile and quick wits are not always fittest for Philosophy. It were better to condense the imagination by something that is gross, than to suffer it to evaporate in too quaint speculations. The plain common sense of *Socrates* triumphed over all the arts and quirks of the Sophists. Philosophy becomes only abstracted, when it leaves off to be solid: men addict themselves to formalities, when they have nothing that is real to say; and never think of betaking themselves to subtilty, but when they are out of hopes to make Reason prevail by simplicity. That same *Protagoras* who was the first that devised captious Reasonings, took that subtle way, because his mind was stuffed with nothing but false Notions.

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He was no true Philosopher, sayes *Aulus Gellius*, because having rendered himself redoubtable by his arguments he became the greatest jangler of the *Sophists*. All was spoilt, saith *Seneca*, by striving too much to refine every thing. For to make a vain ostentation of wit men left the essential part of Sciences, began to weaken the truth of things by the artifice of words, and made use of Sophisms when they wanted solid reasons. By this new art *Nausiphanes* and *Parmenides* turned all things topsie turvie. By this, *Cleantes*, *Chrysippus*, and the rest of the *Stoicks* made their wise King an Effigy, whom they furnished with Titles of Nobility and Treasures, that consisted only in fair words and magnificent expressions, as *Cicero* pleasantly upbraides them. So the Simplicity of reason was corrupted by the artifice of discourse: and men played with truth instead of using it with respect. This was the fault of the *Spaniards* of the last age: they did with Philosophy, as with policy, by the quality of their  
Spirits

Spirits born to reflexions, they drew them both out into unconceivable subtilities ; and there was not any Scholar who did not refine his Master. From whence happened a disorder like to that whereof *Seneca* complained heretofore: disputation became all the fruit of Philosophy, and it was more made use of to try the wit than to cure the mind. Let us be satisfied with the common wisdom that is in use, and with the reason that we find in the Commerce of the World, without keeping such a stir and making so much ado : one runs a hazard of turning Fool, when he would be otherwise, and there is nothing more unprofitable in the common conduct of life, than those two exquisite Opinions which are made use of to subtilize in Sciences.

## XXVIII.

Philosophy taken the wrong way hath spoiled a great many men, and that study of wisdom ill understood hath made a good many fools. *Empedocles* had a lofty and high genius ;  
*Lucretius*

*Lucretius* compares him to the greatest of the Ancients; but the vapours of Melancholy meeting with an overstrained Application, and a too headstrong study, so sullied his imagination and altered his brain, that he became mad; and in the fit of his rage threw himself into Mount *Ætna*, where he was devoured by flames. *Horace* pretends that he endeavoured to render himself immortal by such a fair piece of boldness. *Henry Cornelius Agrippa* in these last Ages so weakened his Spirit by reading of *Plato*, and by the Doctrine of the *Platonists*, that he fell into extravagancy, as he himself confesses. *Peter D'Apono* a Physician of *Padua*, who flourished under *Clement* the Seventh, so marred his imagination by reading of the *Arabian* Philosophers, and by too frequent meditation on the Astrology of *Alfraganus*, that he was put into the Inquisition, as having been suspected of Magick. *Pomponatius* and *Cremoninus*, the one Professor of Philosophy at *Padua*, and the other at *Bolonia*, became impious by

too immoderate study of Philosophy, and left to posterity the marks of their Extravagancy. They were Philosophers who did injury to reason, by by making so bad an use of it. It may be said also, that Libertinage was the most usual effect which Philosophy produced in most part of the Wits of that Age, and which rendred it odious. For by the wicked use that men made of it, they spoiled their Judgment, endeavouring to improve their reason. But to be short, if the most regular wisdom of man is subject to straying, what is to be expected from the false glimpses of an inordinate Philosophy, joyned to the weakness and extravagances of a brain-sick head?

## X X I X.

It is no small progress in Philosophy, to have learnt how much obscurity and uncertainty is mingled with our exactest knowledge, and to be satisfied to be ignorant of that which cannot be known. That is it which makes the knowing man speak with trembling; his great capacity makes him the more  
timorous,



timorous, because the light of his understanding discovers to him more of the darknels of his mind: the greater his penetration is, the more it lets him see his own weakness, and obliges him to distrust his strength. That made *Aristotle* say, that old men are more jealous and incredulous than others; because the experience which they have of the uncertainty of things, renders them more cautious and circumspect. *Socrates* could not conceive why the Oracle had called him the wisest of men: he examined himself, and found nothing worthy of that elogy; unless perhaps that he was wise, because he did not believe himself to be so: his knowledge served to make him the better understand his ignorance, which he frankly confessed. *Epicurus* was naturally wise, for he was a Philosopher even in his pleasures: He was so sharp-sighted, that his Brother *Nicoles* says, in *Plutarch*, that Nature had assembled all the Atoms of knowledge and wisdom, to compose his person; whilst he him-

self says that he knows nothing. His Friends stun him with acclamations and praises, and he minds them not. But besides that modesty which is the vertue of great men, there is a sage and discreet ignorance, that in the conduct of life can doubt of things, whereof no certainty can be had, and is willing not to know such things, whereof no knowledge is to be attained, unless men would dive into that which is inscrutable. For Nature having reserved to her self some certain secrets that are above our reach, it is great wisdom to shut our eyes, and not to pry into such Mysteries. There is no truth but may appear false, nor falsehood which may not seem true: and on this uncertainty is grounded the doubtfulness which the learned man shows in his judgments. It is also to be acknowledged, that this circumspection is one of the great fruits that may be reaped from Philosophy. So that the opinion of those Philosophers is to be esteemed, who place the supreme knowledge of man and his true reason,

reason, in acknowledging the weakness of his wit, and the uncertainty of his judgment: but when they deprive the senses of all credit, because they may may be deceived, and doubt of every thing, because they have ground to doubt of some things, they are not to be listned to. These are extremities far contrary to true Philosophy, which only enjoyns moderation.

XXX.

But how much there is of folly to doubt of nothing, and to doubt of every thing: so much there is of imprudence to approve all, and to approve nothing. To preserve the entire liberty of ones judgment, without being prepossessed with false Reason, or pretended authority, is a strength of mind whereof few are capable. The proud man approves of nothing, for fear he submit himself by approving of somewhat; the light and superficial person approves every thing, that he may spare himself the pains of examining what is proposed to him. To close with every thing,

and to close with nothing, are other extremities to be avoided by a wise man. The design of that Proconsul of *Greece*, who called together to his house all the Philosophers of different Sects that were then in vogue at *Athens*, that he might bring them to agreement, appeared ridiculous to *Pomponius Atticus*: but the design of that *Arabian* Philosopher, who undertook to refute the opinions of all the other Philosophers, and to overthrow their Doctrine, by a Book written to that purpose, which he called *The Destruction of Philosophy*, seems to me more ridiculous. *Averroes* wrote a Confutation of that Book, which he calls, *The Destruction of the Destruction*, and which is one of the best of his pieces. For I look upon it to be the utmost point of extravagancy, considering the way that men live in the world, for one to suspend his judgment amongst so many truths, and so many falsehoods universally acknowledged, and to apply himself to no side. There is likewise weakness to follow only the sentiments

timents of others, and to become a slave to all their opinions: but it is a far more dangerous condition, to be hardened by a spirit of pride, against that inclination which man naturally hath to be perswaded by reason and truth, so as to believe nothing, and to doubt of every thing. I like not that blind submission of the Disciples of *Pythagor*, who reasoned no more after that he had spoken: his authority served them for reason. Those imperious ways, which force men to yield, are fitter to overturn the mind, than to instruct it. For, if we speak properly, all the liberty that man hath, is his right to judge of things as he pleases; and there is nothing that depends on himself but the use which he makes of his opinion. All these excesses are blame-worthy in a Philosopher, who ought to mind nothing, but to hear reason, and find out truth. It is true there are some spirits, who stand in need of exercise and nourishment that they may be employed: all goes well with them, even false Notions,

ons, empty Imaginations, chimerical Designs, and rather than have nothing to think on, they amuse themselves with the Visions of others, their own heads having nothing to present them with for entertainment. From this Character men stumble on another more pernicious, which is a levity in believing every thing. Let us avoid these extremities ; let us examine what is doubtful, but let us give our assent to what is true : let us never be imposed upon by conjectures, but let us not resist evidence ; and let us above all things consult reason and common sense, which are the surest means to attain to the knowledge of the truth.

## XXXI.

When we seriously examine the motives that incline most part of Philosophers to espouse a Party in the Opinions which are publicly professed, we find in their conduct nothing less than Philosophy : For it is often without deliberation, without choice, before maturity of age, by chance, and even sometimes without thinking on it, that they

they cleave to an Opinion. As it commonly happens to those who come to be of a Sentiment, by the Cloaths they wear, by the Country they belong to, by the company they keep, by the interest of the course of life they follow, by the Cabal that wheedles them, by the Croud that draws them along, by the Torrent that hurries them, and always by any other Consideration than that of Reason and Prudence. Wherein they are like those Philosophers, of whom *Cicero* speaks drollingly; *ad quamcunq; disciplinam quasi tempestate delati, ad eam tanquam ad saxum adherescunt*: who stick to an Opinion, as men tossed in a storm cleave to the Rock on which the tempest has cast them. By this means men submit themselves to the tyranny of prepossession, because they want strength of discerning to set them above prejudices: they forsake their own judgment, to be led by the fancies of another: they defend with heat, what they have undertaken without Reason; and maintain rashly what they have

have embraced inconsiderately. And when one is prepossessed by a sentiment, he makes it a senseless point of honour to maintain a foolish opinion. It happens even sometimes, that the animosity of Parties puts a spirit into those that have none, and that many times they have no other talent, nor other reason, but the bitterness whereby they are animated. To conclude, these rash and fortuitous embracings of the sentiments of others, look so ridiculously, that it were far better not at all to be a Philosopher, than to be one of that stamp. The choice that is to be made in these occasions, is to make none at all. For a Philosophy so little founded on reason is but a mere debauchery of Wit, and real weakness.

## XXXII.

Truth is now-a-days so persecuted by all the disguises of the Age, that men have not ingenuity enough to speak candidly, or courage to be sincere. He must be resolute that would be a Philosopher in good earnest. It is a greatness



ness of soul to speak as one thinks, and think as one speaks; as that *Roman* did, of whom *Quintilian* speaks, *Scias eum sentire quae dicit*; You may be assured he speaks what he thinks. A Moral Philosophy from the hand of so candid a man would have been of great force, and the loss of the Treatise of Vertue which he composed is great: for never man spake with greater freedom than he. He imitated that strain of *Socrates*, who could not disguise his sentiments. Men are never subject to speak against their Consciences but when they are weak: interest, passion, head-strongness, prejudice, the torrent of custome, dependance, are the most usual obstacles to sincerity, and the purity of our judgments. Such kinds of weaknesses only make men forsake their own sentiments, to embrace the Opinions of others: And it is but a lowness of Spirit, and a base complaisance that make men square their Opinions, by the judgment of those they depend on, and whom they desire to please. The truth is the most lovely

lovely of all Philosophies, is to know how to live; that is, to accommodate ones self to persons, affairs, and seasons, as reason requires it: Yet that is to be done freely and without constraint; that we may not imitate those weak souls, whose sentiments on every thing are borrowed, and who abase themselves to condescend to Opinions, to which they can hardly submit, because they want courage to retain their entire liberty. So servile a kind of Philosophy is but a counterfeit wisdom. Such was that of the *Senators*, who lived under *Tiberius* and *Nero*, of whom *Tacitus* speaks; who having prostituted themselves to the most infamous kind of flattery, put on the Mask of Philosophy to save them from persecution, wanting courage to be true Philosophers, and truly to speak their Judgments in the Senate.

## X X X I I I.

Disputation is an Art set in vogue by the Schooles to rouse Youth, and to exercise their Wits: it serves to inculcate reason to these that understand it  
not

not, and to impose silence on bablers ; but it serves likewise to feed animosity, to give a fair colour to all sorts of passion, and to maintain opinionativeness, in despite of Truth and sound Judgment. There is no Philosopher who becomes not by this fine Art, a man for progress, and clearing of doubts. For every disputant may undertake to persuade others of his Opinion by noise, when Reason fails him. In fine, disputation, as all things else, has its good and evil: so that without pretending to condemn it, let us imploy it to those uses wherein it may do good. But let us open the eyes of rational men, that we may not abuse them ; for most-times men only dispute, because they understand not one another. *Thales* has vacuity in horror, *Democritus* boggles not at it ; let them but mutually explain themselves, and they are good friends. *Epicurus* believes his senses too much, *Empedocles* believes them not at all: they shall dispute no more, when they have once agreed upon it what the error is,  
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which hinders the belief that should be given them. Let us make a *Cartesian* understand, what sense and sensation is, and he shall easily allow that a Horse is a Beast, though now he believes it not. Men have disputed almost three hundred years about Liberty, because as yet they are not agreed what it is: Let us make appear to Philosophers and Divines, who have spoken of it so differently, wherein it consists, and they shall speak in the same Language. For in fine, when men have reason, and are agreed about principles, there is no more disputing. That great Diversity of Opinions which reign in the World, proceeds only from the different manner that Men think and speak of them. This made *Aristotle* say, that when two rational men are of a different sentiment, it is commonly because they speak differently; and all disputation is more about words than things.

## XXXIV.

Though the Philosophy which is taught in the Schools at present, with that

that method of disputation introduced there, hath been much censured by *Ramus*, a Professor of the University of *Paris*, about the end of the last Age, by *Gassendus* in the beginning of the present, and generally by all the modern Natural Philosophers of any reputation ; because it hath suffered much of the purity of the Doctrine of *Aristotle* to be corrupted by its Professors, who profess themselves to be his greatest Followers : yet for all that I still think it the most convenient, in regard of the way that men live in at present, yea and the most proper for Youth, at the age that they apply themselves to it ; because that after all that hath been said, it stamps on the mind an impression of order, to make men speak exactly, and with method of every thing : it teaches us to reduce unto certain principles the matters we treat of, that we may methodically deliver our opinions : it exercises the spirits of youth by the subtleties of Logick and Metaphysick, in the only way that they are capable of : it gives them but an  
abridg<sup>e</sup>

abridgment of Moral Philosophy, whilst their understanding is not ripe enough to support a long deduction of Conclusions, which are entertainments too serious and calm for the heat and edge of youth ; which is an age of too little experience, to delight in the contemplation of the Works of Nature by a serious study of Natural Philosophy, and of too narrow a capacity to comprehend the vast extent of humane Affairs. It were however to be wished, that that part of Philosophy were handled more methodically in the Schools, and that the most important Experiments and Observations of Nature were more particularly discussed : But it often comes to pass that Masters affect to teach useless things, to make it be thought that they will not forget the necessary. However, the method that is at present in use, might be brought to greater perfection : but that perfection is only to be expected from the genius and candour of the Professors, who can wave things indifferent, and insist on what is essential, according to the

the measure of knowledge that experience may furnish them with. For matters being in the state they are, there is no great reason to expect as to that a well-adjusted Reformation. To conclude, it is probable that the Laws, which suffer no innovation in the use of things universally established, will not countenance any other method, but what is now at present followed in the Universities; that they may not allow too great a freedom to the passion that men have naturally for new Opinions, the tendency whereof is of dangerous consequence in a well-ordered state; especially considering that Philosophy is one of the instruments whereof Religion makes use in explaining its decisions, as we shall see at the end of this Treatise. These are the Reflexions which we have made on Philosophy in general: Let us now proceed to these which are to be made on the parts of Philosophy severally.

*The end of the first Part.*

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Reflexions

# Reflexions

ON

## LOGICK.

## I.



LOGICK may be said to be the first ray of Evidence, and the first draught of Method, that is displayed on Sciences: because its business is to form the judgment, which is the usual instrument that the mind employs in reasoning truly, and in discerning truth and falshood exactly, by distinguishing what is simple from what is compound, and what is contingent from what is necessary. And seeing this Art is the source from whence flows certainty, there is but little



little security in all the Reasonings of men without its assistance. So that its chief office is to discover truth, and make Reason palpable. But that Art became counterfeited by the character of the spirits of those that first made use of it: That ray, though pure and incorruptible in it self, was corrupted; and humane Reason, which submitted it self to that conduct, fell into Errour, by the bad use it made of that Science. Insomuch that Logick, which was only invented to imprint a Character of justness on the mind, did help to mislead it: and the first Precepts of Dialectick which were given to men for a Rule, served as snares laid for them, to make them fall into Errour. For as there is nothing so secret as the thoughts, so men found the art to disguise them into a thousand shapes; as may be seen in the History and Revolutions of this Science.

I I.

The first Philosophers who made more use of reason than reasoning, addicted themselves so much to the study

of Natural Philosophy, that they minded Logick but little: they reasoned in their observations, without knowing the Art of reasoning. There was no Logick in use in the School of *Pythagoras*, but his sole Authority; his Disciples were silent when he had spoken. It is true, *Apuleius* pretends that *Plato* took his first Notions of Logick from the *Pythagoreans*. But *Aristotle* assures us, that though there be exact enough Definitions to be found in their writings, yet they knew not Dialectick, whereof the Art was not then discovered, nor the Rules established. *Zeno Eleates* — a man of a quick and subtile Spirit, was the first that found in discourse that natural connexion of principles and consequences, which he reduced into an Art, as *Plato* testifies and *Proclus* confirms. From whence it appears that the Logick of *Zeno* consisted in observing the dependance which propositions have one on another, and upon that observation to rank them in their natural order. That was his Method; he explained nothing but

but by way of Dialogue, and brought in two or three Persons, who by questions and answers made a Methodical Reasoning on every thing: and from this Art, he was the first that called that Science Dialectick; whereby the way of handling Philosophy in verse which was used before, ceased. For in Dialogue Men found the means to retain an agreeable air, without losing Solidity: and that way *Plato* followed, as the most proper for instruction. The custome was to interrogate him whom they taught, and to make him answer according to his Capacity. *Zeno* who was subtle, mingled a quaint and captious air with his Method, whereby he puzzled the mind. *Protagoras*, the Disciple of *Zeno*, who had likewise *Democritus* for Master, refined that Method, and made it still more nice by his Sophisms; for wanting solidity he endeavoured to be subtle, and coming short of a Philosopher, he set up for a Sophist. *Aristotle* sayes that he framed common-places of questions and answers, whereof he made

an Art to surprize and perplex the mind. *Simon* that famous Artist of *Athens*, of whom *Socrates* speaks so much, and *Crito* his friend, were likewise the Disciples of *Zeno* and great Dialecticians, as *Diogenes Laertius* assures us.

## III.

*Euclide* of *Megara* subtilized more all the subtility of Dialectick, and added to it a brisker way of disputing by giving more heat to his discourse: he drove that even to excess, which gave occasion to *Timon* to reproach him, for having inspired into those of *Megara*, *Ἀνὰρ ἰεσσοῦς*, a rage of disputation, by that Captious and Sophistick Logick that he taught them, which *Socrates* approved not, because there was no Sincerity in that way. It was *Euclide* and his Scholar *Eubulides*, who invented the Sophisms, which became since so famous in the Schools, whereof *Diogenes Laertius* makes mention; which after all have nothing real but their subtility, as the *Dilemma*, the Horned Argument, the *Sorites*, these so famous *Megarick* interrogations, of which

which *Plutarch* speaks; and all the Pettifoggings of that kind, which made Dialectick so contemptible at *Athens*, *Socrates* was obliged to render it ridiculous in his discourses against the *Sophists*, to the end he might undeceive mens minds in the Opinion thereof. From *Euclide Demosthenes* learnt the Art of the *Dilemma*, and these pressing ways that rendered him so vehement in that manner of Eloquence which he followed. The Logick of *Plato*, which is the same with that of *Socrates*, consists more in Examples than Precepts; it hath nothing that is particular for reasoning, because *Socrates* valued not that part of Philosophy. Though both of them placed the first discerning of Truth and Falshood in the senses; yet they pretended that the mind ought to judge thereof, and that Men should only refer themselves to that Judgment: because that without sticking on the surface of things, it penetrated into the eternal and immutable principle of them, which they called the Idea, and which alone they established as the rule

of the distinction which should be made in the Judgment of things. But seeing the Soul of Man was but a small spark of the Universal Soul of the World, and according to them, a Beam of the Divinity; they thought that that particle united to its principle was ignorant of nothing; but that entering into the Body, by that alliance it contracted Ignorance and Impiety, from which Logick served to purify it.

*Alcinous* who explains exactly enough the Dialectick of *Plato*, says, That that Philosopher made use of Division, Definition, and Induction, to remount to the Fountain-head of first Truth, from whence he drew his principles, to the end he might think and speak wisely of every thing; and that that was his most usual Method. Division was as a ladder, whereby to ascend from sensible things to things intellectual. Definition was a way to lead from things demonstrated, to those that were not; and Induction the means to find the truth by the principle of suppositions. For by Division he came to Definition, and by Definition to Induction and .

and Demonstration. And *Diogenes Laertius* assures us, that that was the most general way which *Plato* made use of in making his Demonstrations. *Cicero* and *Quintilian* are of the same Opinion. However, it must be granted, that *Socrates* in his manner of reasoning addicted himself more to Interrogations than Answers; because the Character of his Mind was fitter to raise, than to resolve difficulties. Moreover, it appears by the Principles of the Logick of *Socrates* and *Plato*, which allowed no truth but in the Ideas, that all their School made Profession of knowing nothing; because that Men cannot judge of single and Individual beings, but by the senses which are fallacious: So that the Disciples of *Plato* placed all their Logick in not believing any thing too slightly, and in retaining the entire Liberty of Judgment, among the uncertainties which are found almost in every thing. And in fine, upon that great maxime of a general Incomprehensibility of all things, was the Academy reformed under *Lacydes* and *Arcefilas*, and the  
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Sect of the *Scepticks* and *Pyrrhonists* raised, who doubted of things that were most certain. The *Academicks* understood very well, that nothing could be understood; the *Pyrrhonists* did not so much as understand that. And so far the Principles of the Logick of *Plato* trained on the minds of men.

## I V.

There appeared nothing before *Aristotle*, regulated and settled in Logick. That sublime and intelligent genius so founded the Abyſs of the mind of Man, that he discovered all its movements, by the exact distinction that he made of the operations thereof. Men had not as yet launched out into the Ocean, nor known the depth of the thoughts of man. *Aristotle* was the first that discovered that new way of attaining to Science by the evidence of Demonstration, and of proceeding geometrically to demonstration by the infallibility of Syllogism, the most accomplished work and the greatest attempt of the Wit of Man. Thus you have an abridgment of the Art and Method of the Logick of *Aristotle*, which is so sure, that  
without



without it, one can have no perfect assurance in reasoning, and which is a rule to make men just and exact in conceiving what is to be conceived. But what Road hath he taken to attain to that, and what Art hath he employed to fix the mind of man naturally volatile, and to render it inexpugnable in what it knows? It behoved him first to remove all ambiguity and equivocation from expression, make a perfect Demonstration of Humane Reasoning, which has no better Foundation than Words and Thoughts cloathed with all their imperfections, and to give the greatest solidity of Science to the most uncertain and undetermined matter that can be imagined. He marches in the pursuit of that design by ways then unknown to Reason, and whereof before him there was hardly any tract: he removes from the thoughts all the defects whereby expression is able to impose upon any man, and disperses all the mists wherewith the imagination may offuscate the mind. For that end in the Book of *Interpretation* which is  
a kind

a kind of rational Grammar, he examines the vertue and signification of words ; in the *Categories* he forms the true notions of terms, to prepare them for Division and Definition, by reducing them to their natural sense ; in his Books of *Analyticks*, he lays down the rules of the Modal Conversion of all sorts of propositions, and of the different Figures of Syllogism, whereof he settles the principal grounds on three Axioms of his Logick : and all that constructure is purely a work of his own. He demonstrates nothing in his Book of *Categories*, which are but dispositions to Demonstration : he demonstrates nothing in his Book of *Interpretation*, but the principle of contradictory propositions : but in the Books of *Analyticks* his conceptions are almost so many demonstrations, and his demonstrations so many principles. The *Topicks* are but common places of dialectick or probable Arguments. The *Elenchs* are all the Sophisms imaginable in their source. The two rules which he establishes for the perfect composition  
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tion of a Syllogism, are, That there ought to be nothing false in the matter, nor nothing faulty in the form. His manner of writing has nothing of the faintness of the discourse of *Plato*, nor of the diffused stile of his Age; all is vigorous and close. In fine, that pure Geometrical Method of Demonstration, which he followed, hath appeared always so exact, that it hath been used by the learned in all Sciences, as the most solid, and most consonant to the usual manner of reasoning: and that construction of Syllogism, which is the true Logick of *Aristotle*, is so perfect in its kind, that nothing can have since been added to it, or diminished from it, without corrupting the same. Men of sound Judgment can admit of no other manner, nor no other principles of reasoning, but those of *Aristotle*. And seeing in all Ages men have disputed against reason, because it is Opinion commonly that swayes the World; the Learned Ages have been only distinguished from others, by the esteem they

they have had of the Logick of *Aristotle*. For, to speak the truth, what he hath done for the rectifying of reason, by cutting off equivocation from terms, and confusion from conceptions, is one of the greatest Master-pieces of Humane Reason; it must notwithstanding be acknowledged, that the principal scope of that Logick is not so much to teach man the Art of reasoning, which he knows naturally, as to give rules for examining false reasonings, that they may be well distinguished from the true, and to guard one against the Sophisms of *Zeno* and *Parmenides*. For there was forged in his time a false method of reasoning, which the Sophists put in vogue, and which he endeavours to overthrow by making it known. Upon this Idea all the design of his Logick does move, that he may form the Laws of an Art which gives Laws to all others.

## V.

The School of *Zeno* exercised themselves so much in Dialectick, that the Sect of the Stoicks subtilized more upon

on it, than all the other Sects besides. It was perhaps the difficulty they had to maintain their imaginary Morality, which obliged them to supply by their subtlety what was wanting in solidity to their Doctrine. So they added to the Artifices of *Zeno Eleates*, to the wranglings of *Euclid of Megara*, and to the quaintness of *Socrates*, all the artifice of *Cleantes* and *Chrysippus*, the greatest Dialecticians that ever were, that they might make to themselves a new Logick. To that it was properly that they bent all their wit, says *Cicero*, that they might make to themselves an artificial Reason, having but little real to maintain the false wisdom of their Philosophy: it may be said that they bristled their wit with all the prickles of Dialectick, to arm themselves against their Adversaries, and that they became the most redoubtable Pettifoggers of the School, that they might safely be the greatest amplifiers, in the notion that they forged to themselves of their wise-man. Nor did any thing give greater reputation to  
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their opinion, than the art that they employed to defend it. They altered nothing of the grounds of the Dialectick of *Aristotle*; except that they added to the Syllogism, which was of common use amongst them, a more animated air of disputation, by quick, short, and pressing Interrogatories, which gave great vigour to their reasonings. That knacky and nice humour which held them commonly, made them turn all their Dialectick into perverse sophistification, that they might invent new modes of Syllogism less natural, but more captious than those of *Aristotle*. It is pretended, that *Chrysippus* was so much addicted to that Science, that he alone wrote of it above three hundred Volumes: but he weakened the strength of it, says *Seneca*, by too much refining. It was he and his Successors who first brought in vogue the formalities and virtual distinctions: it is true, that by the vivacity of their wit they gave too great authority to the imagination, which makes things always greater than

than they are, by giving too much vertue to expressions, and too great a power to terms. There was nothing but words and their signification disputed of in their Schools. And thereby they became the first Authors of that Philosophy, which was revived by the Nominalists in these last Ages: at least they have much resembled one another in their way of subtilizing too much on the terms they made use of. But that Dialectick which consisted almost altogether in words, made the Stoicks somewhat superficial; and placed all their Philosophy on their lips. Yet seeing the Logick of *Aristotle* was long unknown, because his Writings were so; the Logick of *Zeno* passed current in the following Ages more than any other; it was even the first that was taught at *Rome*. And it is on these subtleties of Logick, that *Plautus* plays in several places of his Comedies; as *Cicero* did afterwards in many parts of his Works. For the Stoicks by reason of their subtlety were decryed at *Rome*.

*Epicurus* fell upon a method of reasoning less artificeous, but more delicate than that of *Zeno*. What *Cicero* objects to him that he despised Dialectick, is not true but in respect of that of the Stoicks, which he approved not, because he found it to be punctilious. *Epicurus* took a plainer way. That analytical method of division and argumentation introduced by *Aristotle* was unknown to him, which rendered him weak in dispute. He sought truth only by the senses, which he called the first natural light of man; and that was his first Rule, as reflexion on the judgment of the senses was his second. And as he did acknowledge two kinds of truth, the one Natural and the other Moral; so he would have the senses distinguish what is real, and the appetite, which is the way by which the heart declares it self, pursue what is good and convenient for its state: and that is it which he calls Moral Truth. This is in general the ground of his Doctrine; and these are its Principles.

1. That



1. That sense cannot be deceived ; because the impression that it receives from the object is always true, being wrought by a sensible species : but that the reasoning which the Soul makes upon that impression may be false. 2. That the opinion which is drawn from the sensation may be true or false. 3. That it is true when the judgment of the senses is made in form, without let, and with such evidence as Reason cannot resist ; and that it may be false, when it wants that evidence. These are the principal Maxims of the Logick of *Epicurus* : upon which he grounds the different reasonings of the Soul that are made in the mind, according to the sympathy that there is between the Spirit and the Senses. It is only, says he, upon the ideas and notices which the Soul receives by the Senses, that are formed the doubt or opinion, the obscurity or evidence, whereof it receives the impression. Moreover that way of anticipated knowledge, which he calls *presumption*, is in his Doctrine a kind of Idea of things in-

dividual re-united in a general conception: from whence he forms the rule of Definition, which he takes to be the only way of attaining to knowledge. By all these Principles he founded a more natural way of reasoning than the other Philosophers did. It is true that he grounded a part of the simplicity of his Logick upon the perspicuity of terms, being perswaded that all disputes did commonly proceed but from the ambiguity of Propositions. He answered all Sophisms by the sole explication of the words. For when men understand themselves, and are no more Beasts, there is no more disputing. But he was careful to rectifie the defect of that Principle in all his Reasonings, by great circumspection. And *Lucretius*, who in his Poem explains the Doctrine of *Epicurus*, proposes to himself more than fourteen Objections which are made against the judgment of the Senses, to which he answers so clearly in his fourth Book, that he leaves not a word to be said more. In fine, plain common

mon sense, maintained by some natural reflexions, was all the art of *Epicurus*: he made not so much ado about it, as the Stoicks did, who placed a part of their wit in the magnificence of their expressions, whereby they became ridiculous to the *Epicureans*.

VII.

After that the Writings of *Aristotle*, which were so long concealed, were discovered, and that his method was known, men addicted themselves to it in succeeding times, as to the solidest and surest of all: the art of thinking and discoursing appearing in it, in its highest perfection, by the invention of Syllogism; to which all the meditation and reflexions of Philosophers can adde nothing. *Galen* himself who had entertained other Notions on Logick, and who had composed a new *Dialectick*, which is lost, followed at last that of *Aristotle*, and gave it even applause and reputation: and that new Figure of Syllogism, which he invented, passed only for an indirect method of demonstration. *Alexander Aphro-*

*disceus, Simplicius, Ammonius, Philoponus*, amongst the *Greeks*; *Apuleius, S. Augustine, Boetius, Thomas Aquinas*, and many others amongst the *Latines* aswell as the *Arabians*, laboured on the Logick of *Aristotle*, as on the best of all others. It is even true that there hath been nothing said rationally since on that Science, which *Aristotle* had not thought on before: and it may be affirmed, that there has not any new thing almost been discovered, in the universal œconomy of the operations of the mind, since that Philosopher hath written on it. Upon that admirable Model also was framed the Sect of the Scholasticks or Schoolmen, who reigned so long in the Schools, and with so much authority. It is true that there happened therein a Schism between the Nominalists and Realists; but both of them in their disputes reasoned only on the Principles of *Aristotle*: I shall say nothing of the Logick of *Raymund Lully*, which is but the meer gibbish of the Cabal, and a ranking up of words in an order that is but arbitrary, and  
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which hath nothing of reality : it is an art of speaking of all things without judgment, and of discoursing at random as much as men please. In fine, it is a very extravagant Notion of Logick, which *Peter Montanus* pretends to have been copied from head to tail, from an *Arabian* Philosopher called *Abezabron*, proper to puzzle Antichrist when he comes into the world. Upon this fair original *Raymond Lully* formed the Idea of his Logick, which could never as yet make men any thing but Enthusiasts or Ignorant. About two hundred years ago *Laurentius Valla* undertook to reform the Logick of *Aristotle*, by reducing the ten Categories into three, and cutting off the third Figure of Syllogism. He succeeded not in that boldness, for he had no Followers. *Ludovicus Vives* undertook another Reformation, which concerned the Schoolmen more than *Aristotle* ; but likewise without success. *Ramus* had no better luck in his design of overthrowing the credit of *Aristotle*, upon the Memoires of *Valla* and *Vives*.

For the Idea that he conceived of his new Dialectick contains nothing rational, but what he hath borrowed from the Dialectick of *Aristotle*, which he hath corrupted by endeavouring to reform it. *Cardan* composed a Logick, upon the Logick of *Aristotle*, of *Hippocrates*, of *Euclide*, of *Ptolomy*, and of *Galen*; but that Work hath nothing in it that is good, but what he hath taken from the geometrical method of *Aristotle*, which he brings into it.

### VIII.

We shall now tell you our thoughts of the late Dialecticians. The Organ of *Racon* is not methodical; it is made up of curious conceits, which proceed only from an excessive passion that that Author hath to signalize himself by new sentiments, and to say what others have not said. There is nothing less solid than the four Idols, which he makes the Principles of all things. Every thing there is metaphorical, and hardly any thing proper: that geometrical way of reasoning in use among  
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the Schoolmen is unknown to him. But the *Spaniards*, who are the Masters of other people in the matter of Reflexions, refined Logick so much in the last Age, that they corrupted the Purity of Natural Reason, by the subtilty of their Reasonings; falling into empty and abstracted speculations, which had nothing of reality. These Philosophers found an Art of enjoying Reason in spight of common-sense; and of giving a colour, and I know not what specious paint, to the most unreasonable matters. It was not now, as heretofore, the refining the knowledge of things that they endeavoured, but Conceptions and Terms. And Disputation became thereby so full of wrangling and animosity, that it was good for nothing else but to heat the Choler, and blacken the Blood of Philosophers. *Smiglesius* a *Polonian* Jesuit, was one of the first that wrote at the same time both most subtilly and most solidly on the Logick of *Aristotle*. He hath by the Sagacity of his Wit dived into the depth of that Science, with a perspicuity

perspicuity and exactness, that is hardly to be found elsewhere. His Logick is a lovely piece. The other Modern Philosophers are more addicted to Natural Philosophy than Logick: but there is nothing more extravagant, than the Treatise which *Van Helmont* hath written on Logick, by his unreasonable overthrowing all the Principles of *Aristotle*. *Descartes* began a Logick which is not compleated: Some Fragments thereof have remained in the hands of one of his Scholars, under the Title of *Erudition*. There are some Lineaments of Dialectick in his Method, where he sayeth that the mind of man being limited, it must at first be busied about simple Objects; then accustomed by little and little to the knowledge of compound Objects, and to distinguish the one from the other. He would have men to disengage themselves from prejudices, enter into a thought of doubting of every thing, that they may be able to distinguish what is true from what is false. His first Principle, *I think, therefore I am*, which



which he proposes as the first evident and sensible truth, if it be narrowly examined, hath in it somewhat defective: for the Proposition, *I think*, being to be reduced to this, *I am thinking*; that is to say, *I am, therefore I am*, makes a frivolous sense. But nevertheless, as he hath raved the best of any of the Moderns, so what he hath said, for all its Noveltie is not ill devised: And there is found in it a depth of Meditation, which is peculiar to himself; yet there is nothing less Methodical than his Discourse concerning Method. It is a hodge-podge of Morality, Natural Philosophy, and Metaphysicks, which establishes hardly any thing. However there is to be found in it some draughts of Sincerity, which show the true intention of his mind; especially when he most ingeniously says, *That Men gain nothing by Philosophy but the means to speak probably of every thing, and to make themselves be admired by the less knowing.* The Dialectick of Campanella is confused and perplexed, being built upon the Platforme of the

the *Averroists*, whereof he framed to himself too abstracted a Notion. But to conclude this point ; it may be said, that the compleatest Modern piece of Logick in all its parts, is that which *Peter Moumyer*, a Phisician of *Grenoble*, hath published on the Writings of Father *Fabri* a *Jesuit*. There is nothing more Original than what he hath written, chiefly on the Art of Syllogism, and Consequence. No man hath hitherto carried that Science farther, nor hath more exhausted that matter by the almost Infinite Enumeration of all the modes, and of all the imaginable connexion of terms which constitute a Syllogism. But let us proceed to Moral Philosophy, which is somewhat less obscure and more real.

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*The end of the second Part.*

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Reflexions

# Reflexions

O N

*Moral Philosophy.*

I.



**O** R A L Philosophy teaches the way of living, as Logick the manner of speaking and reasoning; the one regulates the thoughts, and the other the desires of the Soul. *Democritus* was the first of Philosophers that thought it strange, that Man who was ignorant of himself, amused himself about the study of the Heavens. For that was the exercise of the Philosophers before *Socrates*, who began first to mind the ordering of his Manners.  
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He had the first notion of it from *Pythagoras*, who applyed himself to Morality whilst he observed Nature. That Science which he learnt from the *Agyptians*, by the correspondence that he had with their Priests, was not his greatest delight; though it was not altogether indifferent to him. The design of that Moral Philosophy of his aimed at the purifying of the mind, from the impurities of the body and the mists of imagination, by the study of Philosophy, which he called a meditation on death; it was also the most pure and religious, but the least exact of all Moral Philosophies. For it contained only bare Maxims, without order and connexion: and his Maxims were only a plain interpretation of the Worship of the Gods, of the care that is to be had of Parents and Friends, of natural honesty, of modesty, probity, publick interest, and other duties of life. And by the Precepts of so sound Doctrine he formed the manners and minds of the people that heard him. *St. Jerome* saith, that  
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all the Morality of *Pythagoras* is comprehended in his Poem, which is not so much to be attributed to him as to his Scholars: we have an abridgment of it in the Commentary of *Hierocles* on that Poem. This *Hierocles* was Governour of *Alexandria* under *Dioclesian*. There is to be found in *Longinus* a hint of the Morality of *Pythagoras*, which gives a great Idea of his Doctrine,

*Do always good: and never lye.*

And though *Aristotle* affirms, that that Philosopher speaks not so well of virtues as *Socrates* did: yet it must be granted, says *Cicero*, that there appeared a certain Character of Wisdom in the followers of *Pythagoras*, which so distinguished them from other Philosophers, that at *Rome* under the first Consuls, a man past for a *Pythagorean* when he had a composed meen; and what *Athenaus* reports of the Sobriety of these Philosophers, hath given Antiquity a great admiration for so austere a Morality.

II. *Socra-*

## II.

*Socrates* gave Principles to the Moral Philosophy, which *Pythagoras* brought from *Egypt*, and began to reduce it into Method, by the distinction which he made of Virtues, and by their Definitions. The other Philosophers that went before him, studied nature. *Socrates* studied himself, by the care he had of cultivating his Soul more than his Reason, and of improving his Manners rather than his Wit. He had a wonderful disposition to virtue, for with a profound Capacity, he had a Modesty and Simplicity that rendered him amiable to all men. That familiar Spirit, which *Apuleius* calls the God of *Socrates*, hath given occasion of much discourse concerning the Morality of that Philosopher. *Plato* pretended that it was a kind of invisible genius that guided him: *Tertullian* and *Lactantius* say it was a real demon: *Plutarch* assures us that it was a way of sneezing to the right or left, which served *Socrates* for a good or bad Omen in any thing he undertook. *Maximus*  
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of *Tyre* thinks it was a secret instinct of his Conscience, which inclined him to good, and averted him from evil. *Pomponatius* judges that it was only the Planet which ruled in his Nativity. And *Montanus* will have it to have been a sudden inclination of his Will, and a kind of inspiration, which served for foresight to that Philosopher in surprises, an intimation in doubts, and a guide in dangers. But without so much ado, it is probable that that pretended Spirit of *Socrates*, which served him for a Conductor in his actions, was nothing else but the Prudence which he had acquired by his Experience in things, and the Reflexions he made on their Events; wherein he was seldom mistaken. Infomuch that it hath been believed of him, what *Homer* would have us believe of the great men, of whom he speaks in his Poems; to whom he assigned Deities for Guides, in the dangers to which their Valour exposed them. For in fine, the Morality of *Socrates* was his Demon: and all his Art consisted in his Prudence.

He was unjustly condemned to death, for want of Religion. His ruine, saith *Plutarch*, was an effect of his Piety; and he became only suspected of irreligion, because he would render the Philosophy of *Pythagoras* purer, by cutting off the Fables and Superstitions that had slip't into it, and which rendered it ridiculous to his disciples, that he might leave nothing in it but what was reasonable. In effect *Socrates* had so great a veneration for the Gods, says *Cicero*, that *Xenophon* having consulted him, if he should follow *Cyrus*: *Mans counsel*, said he, *is uncertain, you must advise with God*. In fine, the Doctrine of *Socrates* was a continual Lesson to Vertue, whereof the most part of other Philosophers speak only for ostentation, or policy: that drolling way he made use of, was but a method to procure attention. Morality which in its natural austerity would have been apt to have disgusted people, invited them under an agreeable appearance: the seasoning which that Philosopher gave to the dryness of his Maxims,



Maxims, made them be much more favourably received of the Publick; yea and thereby he avoided that stile of authority and arrogance, which was then in use among the Sophists, as an odious yoke to Reason: and he handled with so little seriousness the most serious matters, that he made it one of his Maxims to do so, knowing very well that the surest way to persuade was to please.

III.

*Plato* brought Moral Philosophy still to greater perfection, upon the Model that *Socrates* had left him: For by his Ideas, which he gave to every thing, as the Universal Principle of Philosophy, he raised all Vertues to their highest perfection. In his *Phedrus* he explains the nature of Moral Philosophy, the end whereof is to purifie the mind from the errours of imagination, by the reflexions that Philosophy suggests to him. However the greatest part of his Dialogues are but good discourses without principles, but which fail not to hit the mark, and

to instruct in their way ; for the Morals of that Philosopher are full of instructions, which tend always either to countenance Vertue, or to discourage Vice : and that Morality is spread in all his discourses, though there be nothing in it extraordinary singular. Some pretend that the Metamorphosis of *Apu- leius* his Golden Ass, is an Allegory of the Moral Philosophy of *Plato* ; the end whereof is to teach that Philosophy serves to purifie the mind, and to purge it from passions, and those grosser sentiments which make men resemble beasts. For my part I believe no such thing : the notions of it are too impure. There reigned in the time of *Plato* at *Athens* a false wit, introduced by the Sophists, which struck at Manners aswell as Reason. *Protagoras* was a Sophist in Discourse, and *Diogenes* in Manners : all his Morality was counterfeit, there was nothing but arrogance in his probity, and ostentation in his modesty : he acted the severe for envy of *Plato*, whose delicateness he endeavoured to censure, by an affecta-  
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tion of austerity. It was only against Vertue and Grandure that he played the Philosopher: he pitied the King of *Persia* because he was too rich: *Alexander* the Great seemed to him unhappy, because he was too powerful: and merit and good fortune put him out of humour. So that the Morality of *Diogenes* must needs have been extravagant, having had no other foundation but a clownish surliness: he was a great Hypocrite, and in reality more a Bragadochio than Philosopher. So that *Plato* by the solidity of his Doctrine and Vertue, had no great difficulty to overthrow the erroneous Morality of *Diogenes*, and of the Cynicks, who were the Disciples of *Antisthenes*, and of all Philosophers the most open Enemies of modesty and civility. *Plato* was the first that rectified the opinion of the Immortality of the Soul, which *Socrates* learnt of *Pythagoras*, *Pythagoras* of the *Egyptians*, and the *Egyptians* of the *Hebrews*, by the means of *Abraham* whilst he sojourned in *Egypt*. He made it likewise the most impor-

tant principle of Pagan Morality, to oblige men to be vertuous by the hope of reward, and the fear of punishment. But the Doctrine of *Plato* had a tendency to that of the Stoicks; as appears by the example of *Antiochus* of *Ascalon*, who having been bred in the Academy turned Stoick. *Cicero* remarks the reason of it, when he says, that the most part of the Maxims of *Zeno* were drawn from the Doctrine of *Socrates*. *Stoicorum mirabilia Socratica sunt pleraque.*

## IV.

Though in the judgment of *Cicero* the Moral Philosophy of *Aristotle* hath the same grounds, the same principles, and the same œconomy as that of *Plato* hath, and that there is no essential difference betwixt them; yet it is to be granted, that *Aristotle* erects a far more methodical Scheme of Doctrine: not only by the notion that he gives of a publick and a private vertue, in distinguishing the prudence of a Sovereign in the conduct of his State, from that of the Master of a Family in the order-

ordering of his Household, but also by establishing in his Books to *Nicomachus* the two most essential points in Moral Philosophy, a last End, and the Means to attain it: and in the last Book he teaches, that that Beatitude consists in the noblest action of man in reference to the most excellent Object. This is all the Moral Philosophy of *Aristotle*: the most exact, the most regular and compleat of all other Moralities. Every thing therein is ranked in so good a method, that the chief ground of the design, and the parts of it have so natural a relation to one another, and tend all in so streight a line to their end, that it is one of the most accomplished Works of Antiquity. For every thing therein is digested in that admirable method of *Analysis*, very familiar to that Author, who by that art reduces the End to the Means, in the same manner that the parts are referred to the whole, and the effects to the cause. And though in the third Book of his Morals he affirms, that an exact method cannot be observed in such a

matter, by reason of its natural instability, seeing it hath for object the actions of men, which are in themselves so mutable: yet he hath observed a regularity therein, beyond what can be imagined; and nothing warrants more the Morality of *Aristotle*, than the universal policy of the world. For there is not at this day any well settled form of Government which is not founded on that Moral Philosophy. And that is also the Reason that *Machiavel*, who teaches Magistrates to rule by crime, cannot endure it, because it is too vertuous. But after all that hath been said, that Moral Philosophy of *Aristotle*, aswell as that of *Socrates* and *Plato*, can make men only Philosophers, and are too weak to make them thoroughly good. For they can only teach man his duty, but not make him in love with it. Neither is it in these fair Maxims (though men brag so much) that patience in afflictions, and fortitude against adversity is to be found. And when a man has no more but the vertue of a Philosopher, he has none at all. V.The

## V.

The great Principle of the Morality of *Zeno*, head of the Stoicks, was to live in conformity to Nature, founded on that pretended maxim of the School of *Plato*, *Nulla in re, nisi in natura, querendum summum bonum*: That the chief good is no-where to be sought but in Nature. But seeing that maxim favoured sensuality too much, and even agreed with the Doctrine of *Antisthenes*, and the Cynicks, who in their sentiments were naturally impudent, it offended the most part of Philosophers, and made them revolt and fall off from *Zeno*. That Philosopher, that he might not displease the Publick, put his opinion in a cleaner dress, by explaining that conformity to Nature, by a conformity to right Reason. The Masters explanation was variously interpreted by his Scholars. *Cleanthes* would have it, to live conformably to that ray which Heaven had imprinted on the mind of man. *Chrysippus* pretended, that it was to live according to the light of Vertue: but both  
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of them grounded themselves on that principle of *Zeno*, that Vertue and Reason were circumscribed by as narrow bounds as Truth: and as whatsoever is contrary to Truth, is alike false, so whatever is contrary to Reason, and Vertue, is equally absurd and vicious. Every thing moved on that axis in the School of *Zeno*: but the consequences of so extravagant a principle were disliked by all men: nothing appeared more ridiculous than that equality of sins, which made all men alike criminal; and nothing seemed falser than that Tranquillity which they founded on an indifferency for external goods and evils. These Maxims begot admiration, when they were only considered on the outside; but they occasioned laughter, when men pryed more deeply into them. That Kingdom of the wise-man, whereof *Zeno* speaks, which rendred the Stoick Master of the world, so soon as he became a Philosopher, was but chimerical; and that calm of mind which he affected by his insensibility to all things, was but a dream.

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How much agitation might be seen through that apparent Serenity? what servitude appeared in that imaginary Sovereignty? and how frivolous are all the reasonings that *Seneca* makes in his Books of Tranquillity and Constancy to *Serenus*? For to be short, there was nothing natural nor sincere in that Philosophy. All that Vertue had no other principle but Vanity: That external grimace of wisdom which was taught in the *Porch*, was but a false representation of the Soul, it made a man but a machine of Philosophy: and they preached a height of sentiments that was somewhat savage, and bore no proportion to humane infirmity. These fair maxims of constancy, moderation, equality, greatness of Soul, undauntedness, and the like, were but great names, whereby these Ape-Sages disguised their pride. It was rather an hypocritical arrogancy, than true honour, that swayed their conduct. That Stoick who fills the Books of *Seneca* and *Epictetus*, was a wise-man in fanisie, whereof there hath never been seen  
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any example: and *Plutarch* in one of his Treatises against *Zeno*, proves that the Morality of that Philosopher is even more fabulous than the poetical Fictions. Under *Tiberius* men became Stoicks, only that they might put on a steadfastness in disgrace, and all they got by it was some sentiments hoisted above Reason and Humanity, which made them look demure, and dye with a better meen. That Senatour, of whom *Tacitus* speaks, may be an instance of this truth, who turned Stoick upon no other account, but that he might become seditious and an incendiary; for which that Sect was very fit: and an unmasked Stoick was an inconsiderable thing. Wherefore *Lipsius*, in my opinion, had no reason to have so much extolled that Morality, and to have found it so consonant to our Religion: I think there is nothing more opposite to it, because it inspires into men pride and independence: for a Stoick is only humble in his words, that he may be fierce and haughty in his thoughts. That Morality is, in truth,

truth, more splendid than any other, because it is full of lofty expressions and solemn maxims: but there is nothing more superficial than the Vertues it professeth: and in a Stoick every thing, even Modesty it self, is vain.

VI.

There is nothing more honest in appearance, than the Morality of *Epicurus*: it proposes only for its end the pure pleasure of mind, and has no other design but to guide man unto perfect liberty, by curing his infirmities, and delivering him from his passions, that it may make him wise. *Epicurus* himself was a very able man, who fetched great compasses to come to his point, and to disguise appearances: he knew that that soft and voluptuous Doctrine, which *Aristippus* taught, and which abridged not man of his pleasures, was highly censured by *Plato*, *Xenophon*, and all those who stood much upon discipline and probity. He himself affected severity in his manners, that he might be the more favourably heard: and he concealed his real sentiments

timents, under so frugal a way of living, and so prudent a conduct, that *Cicero*, who in many things finds fault with him, could not forbear to praise him for that. *Gassendus* makes a great Apology for the opinion of that Philosopher, pretending that the pleasure wherein he made his happiness consist, was no more but a sovereign tranquillity of the Soul, accompanied with a perfect constitution of body. But *Cicero*, *Horace*, *Plutarch*, and almost all the Fathers of the Church, speak otherwise of it. The truth is, that pleasure, wherein *Epicurus* placed his chief good, is a great Problem in his Philosophy. And *Cicero* says that the *Epicureans* were wont to complain, that men were always mistaken in the pleasure that they speak of, and that they were not rightly understood: and that divided the opinion of the Learned, as to the truth of their Doctrine; which by the different ways that *Epicurus* explained himself in, had two faces; one lovely and agreeable, and the other severe and

and rude. *Epicurus* spake sometimes like a Philosopher in a grave strain, declaiming against voluptuousness; and by and by in a softer dialect, and like a sage Debauchee: he was a voluptuous Politician, who would please the delicate, without offending the severe. There were secrets in that School which were not indifferently revealed to every body. *Epicurus* when he spake in publick, mentioned nothing but the pure pleasure of the mind; but when he entertained his Confidants at privileged times, he altered his stile. And here you have all the mystery of that admirable Doctrine; whereof the expressions were innocent, and the opinions criminal: it was a lewd inside under a fair outside, civility in words and impudence in actions. These Philosophers cloaked under an apparent strictness an indulgence for themselves, and all the art of their Morality tended only to hide their irregularity. For they lived ill, though they spoke well: and to justify their own conduct, they never found fault with other men; wherein

wherein they were very ingenious. So polished a Morality gave ground to the different sentiments that Antiquity entertained of them; they passed both for vertuous and for debauched. But they who undertake to justify *Epicurus*, are too strongly out-voted, not to be ashamed to favour him. For not to speak of the primitive Stoicks, who have always declaimed against him, there was never any Doctrine more decried by the Fathers of the Church than his. It is true *Epicurus* had many great vertues, that his Disciples were discreet, faithful, commodious and kind to their friends, and that he himself was sober: but in reality that sobriety was but a regimen; the weakness of his constitution obliged him to that circumspection for his healths sake, and the most important hours of his life were the hours of digestion. He had besides a modest air, and that he might purge himself of the arrogance of a Philosopher, he voted often for ignorance against the Learned. Yet in the most austere heads of his  
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Morality, there appeared some Lineaments of Humanity, that discovered the real Sentiments of his Heart. In a Word, howsoever men may colour this Doctrine, by the pleasure which Reason and Honesty may allow to the most speculative Philosophers; yet there is so great enormity in the boldness that it takes to baffle Religion, that a good and vertuous man cannot maintain it. And not to rip up any more the injustice of *Epicurus*, proved by *Aristodemus* in *Plutarch*, of depriving God of Providence; the discourse of *Theon* in the same place, to prove that the Pleasures of the Body are preferable to the Pleasures of the Mind; what *Diogenes Laertius* reports of his Gallantries, his Mistresses, his Nicety in his Pleasures, and of the Effeminacy of his Sentiments, are sufficient Reasons to render that Doctrine suspected to a true Philosopher. And *Plutarch* pretends that *Epicurus* by taking Man off from Religion, deprives him of a greater pleasure, than all the other delights he leaves him. It is no calumny

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then to say, that that Philosopher was not over innocent.

## VII.

The noise that the Morality of *Zeno* and *Epicurus* made at *Athens*, where they were much in vogue, excited the Wits to employ themselves in that part of Philosophy more than in any other: that study grew so much in fashion there, that Natural Philosophy was neglected; and men busied themselves so much in finding out the Chief Good that they slighted all the rest. But as every one reasoned according to his Principles, so every one likewise shaped to himself a Beatitude according to his Humour. *Herillus* who loved study, placed the chief good in Knowledge: *Calliphon* and *Dinomachus* placed it in honest and lawful Pleasure; *Diodorus* in the Absence of pain: *Theophrastus* who loved a commodious and easie life, thought that Vertue without Fortune would not make a Man happy. Some added to that Health, others Indolency, Beauty, and a good Constitution: severals placed Happiness in Honour,



Honour, Credit, Authority, Reputation, and in the other qualities which might contribute to the satisfaction of Body and Mind. It was from that eagerness which men had then to form to themselves a Model of Felicity, wherein every one fancied to himself an interest above all other concerns; the notions of it multiplyed so vastly by the multitude of different Spirits who applied themselves thereto, that *Varro* reckons up two hundred and fourscore different Opinions upon the sole question of the Chief Good; as *St. Augustin* in his Book *De civitate Dei* assures us; every one pursuing the object to which his humour drew him, that he might make to himself a Beatitude according to his own mind. But the Spirit of man is so weak in all the Reasonings that he makes of the Chief Good of his own head, that he cannot conceive but an imperfect notion thereof: for he wanders after the shadow, instead of the truth which he pursues. It is true, that that Idol of Glory, and Honesty, which the Pagan

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Morality proposed for an Object, how frivolous soever it was, did notwithstanding stir men up to Vertue, and was the firmest Foundation it had. That is all that man by the light of nature found reasonable. From that principle *Panetius* deduced the most essential parts of the duties of life, for the instruction of men. For since *Zeno* and *Epicurius* there hath appeared no new model of Morality, whereof any thing remains. The Characters of *Theophrastus*, the Comedies of *Menander*, *Plautus*, and *Terence*, are indeed fair Lessons for manners but without Principles. And of all the Moral Philosophies of *Paganism*, that of *Cicero* contained in his *Offices* is the most exact; for its maxims are grounded on austerest vertue. The Morality of *Seneca* is not altogether so pure; for though his Maxims be most lovely, yet they are not always maintained by the same Reason. *Plutarch* is more real, he teaches vertue in a plainer way, by relating the actions of the vertuous. *Pliny*, for all he was so great a Libertine,

tine, hath some draughts of Morality in the Prefaces to his Natural History, which are of great weight. He speaks always magisterially, with that loftiness of expression, that is natural to him. His sole design is to reform manners by his vehement declamations against Luxury, Debauchery, and the other Disorders of his Age; his intention is always good, in praising sincerely what is laudable, and condemning what is otherways. Of all the Stoicks *Epietetus* is the most rational; for he is the most sincere, and least head-strong of all. The rest of Philosophers who wrote on manners, followed either the Principles of *Aristotle*, as *Panetius*, *Cicero* and *Plutarch*, or wrote to little purpose.

VIII.

But nothing more discomposed the Heathenish Morality, than the Lives of the Primitive Christians. That Doctrine which the Apostles and their Successors published, teaching men to be humble in greatness and modest in success, and that Probity whereof Chri-

stianity made Profession, appeared so wonderful to them; that in making attempts to imitate the Christians, they fell into extravagancy, by stepping beyond their Character, and the bounds of that worldly wisdom, whereof they followed the maxims. Their virtue degenerated into ostentation, and they became Braggadochioes, when they could be no longer Sages; and as it is often weakness that makes men bold, so it was only vanity that made the Pagans become vertuous. The life of *Appollonius* so full of Prodigies, was only written by *Philostratus*, that he might oppose it to the miraculous life of JESUS CHRIST: So likewise the lives of the Sophists were published by *Eunapius*, who lived under *Theodosius* the great; that he might compare them to the lives of the Primitive Believers, and overthrow the belief that men had in their Doctrine. *Vopiscus* in imitation of *Eunapius* undertook the same: and long before them *Epiſtetus*, who had remitted much of that haughtiness which he learned from *Zeno*,  
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by the Conversation he had with the Christians, gave occasion to that spirit of emulation, which made the Morality of the Stoicks reflourish under the Empire of the *Antonines*: For at that time most part of Philosophers became Stoicks, as *Sextus Empiricus* affirms, that they might counterfeit the severity of Christianity by that surly gravity which the *Porch* inspired into them, and which was good for nothing but to puff man up. But however, all other moral Philosophy appeared very defective in comparison of Christian morality; which only at length became commendable, by the profession it made of modesty, disinterestedness, and sincerity. For there is none but the Christian Doctrine, that teaches man to appear to be what he is, and to be what he appears; because to a Christian whose Glory is his Infirmary, it is no shame to discover his Imperfections. He is that true *Hero*, who has always courage enough to be sincere, and is never so weak as to disguise himself. All the Pagan Mo-

ality was overthrown by the first word that J E S U S C H R I S T uttered in publick; when in his Sermon on the Mount he pronounced, Happy the poor and humble in spirit: because all the Pagan Morality is but Pride, and the Christian, Submission. The one teaches man to be vain, and the other to be modest. And seeing purity of manners and sincerity is only to be found among Christians, it may be affirmed, that there is no real Probity out of Christianity. For the greatest Probity that can be, if it be attacked by an interest as prevalent as is the motive to the vertue whereof it makes Profession, may succumb. It is only to be found in our Religion, wherein the interest of an Eternity, which surpasses all other concerns, can render impregnable the principles that support it. So that out of Christianity there is no true Morality, because there is no real vertue: and every Morality else, besides that of a Christian, is commonly but a kind of policy, and piece of cunning.

## I X.

The truth is, Pagan Morality began  
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of it self to appear so weak for supporting the infirmity of man, that it fell altogether into contempt, amongst those who aspired to a good life : for besides that the indifference for pleasure or pain, for riches or poverty, for glory or ignominy, which *Zeno* taught, is not to be found real but in the Christian Religion ; and that that Felicity which Philosophy endeavoured to find in sufferings, was only to be found in our Doctrine, all the Vertue of Pagans appeared to those that examined it, but an Art to hide Vices, and a Lesson of Ignorance ; because it teaches man only to fill his mind with false Notions of Constancy and Stedfastness, whilst Christian Philosophy discovers to him his infirmities ; and that the one teaches him to follow his desires, and the other to repress them. By the help of that light, and by the knowledge of these admirable truths the new Morality of the Gospel was established, which made the wise change their maxims, and all the earth its countenance : because that Heavenly Do-

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Doctrine of the Law of Grace, wherein God had included the depth of his Wisdom, having taught man what it behoved him to hate, and what he ought to love ; humiliation and poverty became preferable to greatness and riches ; and the Christian measured no more his esteem and inclinations, but by the Eternity which God proposed to him for a recompense. That was the Morality which the Apostles preached, which the Martyrs sealed with their Blood, which Virgins sanctified by the Purity of Life, which the Laws authorised, and which, in fine, was settled in the World by Probity and Reason. Amongst the Fathers who best explained that Divine Morality to men, *S. Basil*, *S. Chrysostome*, *S. Jerome*, *S. Ambrose*, *S. Augustin*, *S. Gregory*, *S. Bernard* and *Thomas Aquinas*, obtained greatest reputation. *S. Basil* did it as a Spiritual Father, in his ascetic discourses ; *S. Chrysostome* as a preacher in his Sermons, and in his Meditations on the Epistles of *S. Paul*, where he hath left us one of the perfectest



fectest Ideas of Morality, which we have in our Religion; and a pattern likewise of preaching, which ought to be proposed to those who are called to that holy Ministry: *S. Jerome*, *S. Ambrose*, and *S. Augustin* have done it as Interpreters of the Scripture, and Doctors of the Church; *S. Gregory* as a Philosopher by his Allegories; *S. Bernard* as a Contemplative, and *Thomas Aquinas* as a Theologue. His *secunda secunda* is the most rational, the best digested, and most accurate Morality that hath ever been written. It is indeed the Morality of *Aristotle* reduced into the perfectest method that it can be. *Javellus* a theologue of the same order with *Thomas Aquinas*, hath written the best after him on that part of Philosophy. The work of *Petrarch* upon the divers accidents of life, is a kind of Moral Philosophy: but seeing it is made up but of curious reflexions on Fortune, it is of no use for mans conduct. It is true that it is fertile in thoughts, but very barren in Reason and Discourse. There is more  
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ingeniousness in the Morality of *Bacon*, than in his other works. Every thing therein is well excogitated; but I know not if all be true. The wisdom of *Cardan* teaches nothing less than manners, his notions are empty, which prescribe no real course for the conduct of life; and that knowledge of the World which he promises, is but a Morality of ostentation and no ways of practice. *Descartes* in his method hath but one or two principles of Morality; Natural Philosophy was his predominant passion. I wave an infinite number of other Authors, who have succeeded in this kind of writing, especially the *Italians* and *Spaniards*, who are pleased to moralize more than other people, as appears by their spiritual Fathers, who are the most famous.

## X.

To conclude, we have seen in these last Ages Moralities, whose maxims were admirable, and their principles notwithstanding horrid. Men suffer themselves to be misled by these fair appearances, because they examine not  
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the grounds of them ; and blindly follow those maxims, without informing themselves of the principles thereof. The purest Morality cannot be true, if it be not founded on a sound and Orthodox Faith; such as is that of the Universal Church, to which men should adhere, and firmly rely on. But it is a matter much to be lamented, That that Morality, which might be so ready a relief to Christians in their afflictions, becomes to them almost useless when they stand in need of it, through the Ignorance in which they live, of the Holy Instructions of so saving a Philosophy; That so necessary a remedy turns fruitless through the levity of our minds, which in vain seek after Humane Consolations; and through a Natural Curiosity which puts out the heavenly light within us, and fills our souls with extreme darkness. Happy is that Christian who being perswaded of his Religion, knows no other Philosophy but the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of true Wisdom. But that once for all we may undeceive ourselves

selves of the Vanity of all Humane Knowledge: let us labour to conceive how cold are all the consolations of Pagan Morality to a man abandoned of all the World, after that he hath been adored therein, such as we have seen in this Age, and how comfortable to a man in affliction is the Morality of our Religion, though it should only serve to redouble his Faith in the Agony of Tribulation, by teaching him that affliction is a favour, and that temporal pain is the assurance of a Joy and Reward that shall never have an end. In this it is properly that the Chief Good, which Pagan Philosophy in vain sought after, does consist, which can only be the fruit of the pure and holy Christian Religion: but nothing denotes so much the weakness of man, as to know that Chief Good, and not to love it, to have reason and want strength to follow it, and to be always endeavouring to persuade, but never able to convince himself.

*The end of the third Part.*

• Reflexions

# Reflexions

O N

## *Natural Philosophy.*

I.

**I** Very well conceive that man may frame to himself principles of Logick and Moral Philosophy, because reasoning, and manners, which are the object of these two Sciences, are the work of man: but I cannot conceive how he dares form principles of Natural Philosophy, whereof Nature is the object, and that the Work of God. In effect what means have we to know the design of the Creator, who many times have not understanding enough to know the designs of the Creature? Did God advise

advise with you, when he suspended in the air the Foundations of the Earth, to frame an Universe? And which of the Philosophers hath founded that eternal wisdom, which was before all things, that he might discover the depth of his thoughts. St. *Augustin* saith, that the World is a great Theatre, where the Art of him that made it shines forth on all hands: But is it not rather a great Riddle which the Philosophers have essayed to explain without being able to succeed in it. It is true there have been minds sufficiently qualified, to know the effects of nature by examining their causes: But never was there any as yet capable, to see into the intentions of the Creatour, and to discover the hidden secrets of his art, by knowing the principles of this great work. For if the smallest Creatures that are within the reach of our senses, and which we have so long studied, have something that is incomprehensible: If the smallest Herbs of the Fields have qualities unknown to man: Shall we be so vain as to pretend to know

know the vertue of those great Machins which compose the World, and to ascend to the source of all the Wonders that we admire therein. Let us not deceive our selves: Nature hath her mysteries; she attains her ends by wayes that we are ignorant of: And since men have applied themselves to the knowledge of her Secrets, there hath been so little of certainty discovered, that one would think nothing should more bring down the pride of man, than the study of Natural Philosophy. It is an abstruse and profound Science, wherein there is little agreed upon amongst men: those that have spoken of it best, have as yet said nothing to the purpose: So therefore let us not beat our Brains to imagine new Systemes. That matter hath already passed through so many heads, that if there had been any better than what we know, it would have been found out: And indeed, after so much thinking on it, it is even wisdom to mind it no more; and to content our selves by an humble acknowledgment of

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our own ignorance, to admire the depth of the knowledge of God. It is true, there is nothing so capable, fully to satisfy the mind of man, as the consideration of Nature, and Natural Beings; no other Science tickles so much our curiosity. Happy is he that can know any thing thereof, but Nature shows her self to us only by her out-side. The knowledge that we have of her is but superficial, and God Almighty to punish our Pride, takes pleasure to abandon us to our curiosity, as to a chastisement; because by inspiring into us a desire to know all things, he reduces us to the pass of being ignorant of all, and even of our selves.

## II.

But by how much that Science is vain through the obscurity and uncertainty of the matters it treats of, by so much it is frivolous through the Diversity of Opinions, that are to be found in the sentiments of the greatest men who studied it; for all the Ancient Philosophy hath hardly as yet been able to establish any Principle that is agreed upon.



upon. *Thales* makes Water the principle of all things. *Heraclitus* pretends that it is Fire; *Anaximenes* will have it to be the Air; *Pythagoras* maintains they are numbers; *Democritus* Atomes, *Museus* Unity, *Parmenides* *Infinisum*, or Infinitude. And in so profound an obscurity of Natural Beings, and among so many different sentiments one cannot be sure of any thing. *Protagoras* thinks that what appears true to every one severally, is true in effect. *Aristippus* will have nothing true but what one perceives by an internal perswasion of mind. *Chrysippus* says, that the senses are continual impostours. *Lucretius* assures us that they never are. *Picus Mirandola* in the examination that he hath made of the Doctrine of the Pagans, *Ludovicus Vives* in his Book of the Corruption of Arts, *Possevin* in the third Book of his Bibliothek, are eloquent upon the uncertainty of the Judgments of Men: in effect there is nothing more certain than that, nor freer from dispute. It is not, that one

ought to doubt of every thing ; but we should not at least too easily believe these Philosophers, who propose to us daily new principles of Natural Philosophy. Let us examine them before we believe them: let us distinguish what is probable in their Doctrine from what is true, and not suffer our selves to be surprized by their Conjectures. Let us admit of no Systemes, but upon the terms that *Ptolomy* proposed his, which he desired should pass for an Opinion, without pretending that men should believe it on his Authority, before that he proved his Reasons. And in truth one is very ridiculous, when he speaks not modestly on this matter, whereof there is scarcely any thing known. *Lucretius* for all he is so presumptuous in the Judgments that he makes on Nature, confesses that he knows not the Principles thereof. It may be said then in general, that the Primitive Philosophers by giving their principles, have only pretended to give their conjectures ; for Nature shews her self hardly to any man. It is true, the Invisible Power,

Power of its Vertue may be known by the visible effects of its Operations. But what Eye is so sharp as to penetrate to the source of its Intentions, and to unfold the Designs thereof? Let us therefore only consider the Principles which Naturalists propose to us, as Explications which may be made on what passes in Nature, and not as Laws that they impose upon her. Let us look upon the Numbers of *Pythagoras*, the Atoms of *Democritus*, the Plenitude and Vacuity of *Leucippus*, the Ideas of *Plato*, the Matter and Form of *Aristotle*, the Vortices and Corpuscles of *Descartes*, which these great men propose for the Principles of their Natural Philosophy, as Conjectures to be examined, and not as Rules to be followed. Let us even listen more favourably to those who give the best Reason for every thing, because they have had the wit to rank their Imaginations in better order: But let us not think them such Fools, as to have been willing to vent for Science, what is but Opinion, and to make current for

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Truth, what is but Probability. It is a Caution that one cannot take too much to make him walk discreetly in so obscure a Path as that of Natural Philosophy, the ways whereof are uncertain. For as a false Rule makes a whole Building irregular; so in the same manner a false Principle renders the whole Platform of Natural Philosophy defective.

## III.

What course is then to be taken in so great an uncertainty, and what guide may one follow in so difficult a way? *Plutarch* in the second Volume of his Opuscles, reckons up the different Opinions of the ancient Philosophers concerning Natural Philosophy, to a pretty considerable number, as *Cicero* had done before in his Academicks: and both adhere to the sentiment of *Aristotle*, which after examination of all they prefer to the rest: wherein they were followed by *Galen*, and all the solid wits that have been since. So that ye have at first great Suffrages for *Aristotle*: For what can  
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be more advantageous for that Philosopher, than the testimony of these great men; who have been all three particularly considerable, for the solidity of their judgment, and the accurateness of their Criticks. That judgment which they made of *Aristotle*, hath been followed by all those who in the following Ages applied themselves to the discerning of the capacity of that profound Genius. *S. Jerom* saith that the mind of that Philosopher hath been a kind of Prodigie of Nature, who knew all that man is naturally capable to know. And *Medina* a Spanish Divine, pretends that the capacity of the Spirit of man cannot dive into the knowledge of Nature, as *Aristotle* did, without the particular assistance of a good or bad Angel. It is true, that besides that that Philosopher hath reported all that hath been said in Natural Philosophy before himself, to approve or to refute it; there is nothing almost since to be found in that Science which is rational, that hath not passed the tryal of his thoughts, and

whereof he hath not conceived the Principles. But seeing men never almost study him by themselves, or that he is not well understood by them; there are a kind of good people, who take sometimes that which he refutes, for the thing he approves; and that which he approves for what he refutes. This occasions contradictions in his Followers, who to warrant themselves by his authority, make him incline to their side, whether he will or not: and so it is no wonder if themselves be lost, when they have put their Guide out of the way.

## IV.

But let us not be dazzled with the lustre of the high reputation of that Philosopher; let us neither listen to the Voice of all Ages, nor to the Votes of all the Learned that have spoken in his favour; let us trye *Aristotle* by himself, let us see in what manner he hath handled that Science of Natural Philosophy, which is the most common Rock on which all Philosophers split: and that we may not be surprized, let

us begin to judge of his Doctrine by his Principles, that we may be the more equitable in our sentence. As he had a Wit beyond the common rate of men, so he followed extraordinary methods. He begins by a kind of History of the Opinions of all the Philosophers that went before him; and that he might furnish his thoughts with matter, and say nothing but what he himself was fully informed of, he is willing to know all that others have said on the same subject. And instead of going into forraign Countreys to converse with the Learned, as *Plato* did into *Egypt*, *Persia* and *Italy*, there to study their sentiments: *Aristotle* shut himself up in his Closet, that he might examine in private all that was written on Natural Philosophy, and upon that examination establish his Opinion, rejecting what made against him, and making use of what he found for his turn. This was his first method. He affirms nothing but what he was sure of, by the perfect knowledge he had of

of the Opinions of their Philosophers. His Physicks are an abridgment of the Natural Philosophy of *Pythagoras*, *Ocellus*, *Timæus*, *Leucippus*, *Parmenides*, *Hippocrates*, *Melissus*, *Democritus*, and of others that went before him. The most part of Philosophers speak at random what they think fit; *Aristotle* alone dives into his matter, prepares it by overthrowing that which choaks his Opinion, and lays down nothing, till he hath first refuted that which is contrary to his Doctrine, and therein consisted his chief Talent. That is the method which he takes to establish his Principles. For having overthrown the Opinion of *Parmenides* and *Melissus*, who established an immoveable and infinite being for the Principle of all things; having made appear the absurdity of the sentiment of *Democritus*, *Empedocles*, *Anaxagoras*, and the other Philosophers; he lays down his Opinion of three Principles, Matter Form and Privation, as the most proper method to illustrate the alteration



tion which happens in Generation, wherein men always conceive something that receives, and something which is received, that is to say, a subject common to the Form which comes a-new, and to that which goes away: and that is so true, that without it a new production cannot be conceived. *Plato*, who admits the same Principles as *Aristotle* doth, distinguishes not Privation from Matter as he doth, who is the Author of that distinction, and brags of it as his own Invention. That made him say in the last Chapter of his first Book of Physicks, that most part of the errors of Ancient Philosophy proceeded from this, that the first Philosophers had not framed a distinct enough Idea of Matter and Privation: and that which he calls Form, is nothing else but the principle of the dispositions, qualities and operations of every compound being; and which constitutes every thing in its essence making it to be what it is: so that taking these three Principles of *Aristotle* as a proper method to give a Notion  
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of what occurs in all the mutations that happen in Nature, and to facilitate the knowledge which men ought to have thereof, they are preferable to the principles of all the other Philosophers. And this is an abridgment of his general Physicks.

## V.

In the first Book, he lays down the method that he proposes to himself in his design; and seeing the knowledge of Nature is in it self obscure, he pretends that men should raise themselves as by steps to clear and evident notions, from such as are not so; and that in that Science we must descend from generals to particulars. He adds that in that manner all things become clear in becoming sensible by their particular accidents and circumstances. Having established that method, in the rest of that Book he refutes the principles of other Philosophers to confirm his own. In the second Book he examines what Nature is, and inquires into the proper signification of that terme. In the second, third, fourth and fifth Books he treats

treats of Causes, of Motion, and of Place, which are the attributes of a Natural Body. In the sixth Book he explains Quantity, whereof he makes an exact Treatise; he begins to give an Idea of the first Mover in the seventh Book: and in the eighth he speaks of Time which is the natural measure of Motion. In the first and second Books of the Heavens he describes the Stars, the matter whereof they are formed, their Qualities, Motion, Scituation, Figure, and all that concerns the construction of the World: and in the third and fourth he treats of the Gravity and Levity of Celestial Bodies, and of the different Opinions that the Ancients entertained thereof: and there he discourses likewise of the Elements and their Qualities. In the first Book of the *Meteors* he explains all that happens in the Air: in the third and fourth, what occurs in the Earth and Sea; where he likewise treats of Winds, Thunder, Lightning, Exhalations, Thunder-bolts, the Rain-bow, False-suns or Parelies: and in the fourth  
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he speaks of Heat and Cold, of Siccity and Humidity, of Putrefaction, of Salts, of the different qualities of mixt bodies, of their mixture and temperament. In the three Books of the Soul, he explains its nature, and the operations thereof, as well by the external senses, as by the internal faculties. In the Books of his little natural questions he observes particularly all that concerns sensation, memory, reminiscence, sleeping, waking, dreams, the prognostick of dreams, the motion of Animals, their progression, the length and shortness of life, old age, youth, respiration, sickness and health. The History of Animals is his Masterpiece, and the completest of his Physicks; in the four first he hath included the different kinds of Animals, and in the five last he hath hinted at their divers manners of multiplication: he hath enriched that work with an infinite number of Experiments, and curious Questions, where one may find, if he narrowly observe, the first hints of the most part of the new discoveries, whereof modern Philosophy

lofophy boasts. I wave his Book of Colours, his Treatife of Phyfiognomy, his mechanical Questions, his Problems, the two Books of Generation and Corruption, the Book of the World, which he compofed for *Alexander*, and many other Subjects which he hath handled, wherein he rendred a Reason of every thing from the greateft to the leaft, as *Diogenes Laertius* obferves. This makes me fay for Conclusion, that his Natural Philosophy is the moft ample that ever was; and that there has nothing efaped that vaft mind, whole profound capacity and comprehensive genius hath fathomed all things.

V I.

And fo much may be faid in favour of *Aristotle*: Let us now fee what may be found amifs in him. There is a great deal of confufion in that Treatife of his eight Books of Phyficks: The connexion is no-ways natural; there is nothing harder to be underftood than the firft Matter, and the eduction of Forms out of that Matter: the whole treatife of Motion is abftracted; the eternity

ternity of Motion which in his eighth Book he pretends to prove by circulation is incomprehensible, and all that Book is too metaphysical. The Treatise of Time and Place is not purely physical, seeing it can quadrate to Spirits. What he says of Time is borrowed from *Archytas*, as that which he speaks of Motion is taken from *Ocellus*, and what he says of Vacuity from *Timaeus*, as *Patricius* has observed. What he affirms in the two first Books of the Heavens, in the Treatises of Comets, the Rain-bow, and of some other Meteors, is not found to be true in all its Circumstances: Yet the fourth Book of Meteors is to be excepted, which seemeth to be more exact than the rest. The Scituation, which in the third Book of the Heavens he hath given to the sphere of Elementary Fire, conform to the Opinion of *Leucippus* and *Democritus*, has not any Foundation: *Pythagoras* was not of that opinion. In his second Book of Meteors he pretends that the Earth under the Equinoctial cannot be inhabited: which Experience proves

proves to be false. But what he teaches of the eternity of the World, how falsely soever, is still more pardonable than the rest. He could not conceive the Creator but in the way that we conceive the Sun, which produces light at the very instant that it begins to be: and from thence there may be even great advantage drawn against the *Arrians*, who could not comprehend the Word but with some kind of posteriority to his Principle. So that the Error of *Aristotle* might have furnished Reasons to rectifie the *Arrians*, who perhaps would not have lost their way, if they had listned to the Argument of that Pagan, although he was out of the way himself. *Patricius* a Philosopher of *Venice*, in his Book of the Discussions of the Doctrine of *Aristotle*; *Ramus* in his Physical Schools, *Gessendus* in his Observations against the Peripateticks, relate a great many things in Natural Philosophy, wherein that Philosopher has been mistaken, especially in the order and construction of Celestial Bodies, in the History of Animals,

in the Anatomy of the Body of man, and in some other matters. I grant the modern Natural Philosophy is so improved by Experiments, and by the help of new Instruments, whereof it makes use, that it hath surpassed the Physicks of *Aristotle* in some things, which have been more clearly discovered in the progress of time: and that the most part of the Opinions of ancient Philosophers, contained in the second Tome of the Works of *Plutarch*, concerning the Heavens and Stars, are found false by Instruments proper for Celestial Observations, that have been invented in these last Ages. In fine, I grant that *Aristotle* is less demonstrative in his Physicks, than in the other parts of his Philosophy, that his method is not so exact, nor his principles so sure. But that defect is more to be imputed to the matter, than to the capacity of the Workman, which shows it self always equally vigorous in all his Reasonings and Reflexions. Reason it self for all it is so universal, yet is limited in some Subjects: and one cannot transgress



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gress those limits, but that he goes too far.

### VII.

This is the judgment that may be made of all the Philosophers, whether ancient or modern, who have written on Natural Philosophy. The *Egyptians* have left nothing on this Science, whereof there remains any trace, but their Observations on the Heavens and Celestial Bodies; which they understood better than other people, because the quality of their spirits born to Prognosticks, inclined them more to it. *Simplicius* says that *Calisthenes*, at the desire of *Aristotle* his Kinsman, sent into *Greece* Observations on the Heavens, made by the *Chaldeans*, for above two thousand years before *Alexander*. *Porphyrus* assures us, that he saw these Observations. What the *Phenicians* and *Aethiopians* wrote on Natural Philosophy is lost, by the loss of the Books of *Diodorus* the *Sicilian*, from the fifth to the eleventh. However the *Grecians*, who have been the Masters in all other Sciences, have been likewise in this, whereon

they have written better than other people, and have been the first observers of Nature. For *Plutarch* in the Life of *Anicias* saith, that *Anaxagoras* and the other Philosophers of *Ionia* of that time were only Naturalists. To speak properly, the *Assyrians* understood no more but the first Elements of Astronomy, by the unexact Observations which they made without Instruments; having no other way to measure the motions of the Stars but by water-Glasses. Amongst the *Grecian* Philosophers *Pythagoras*, and *Ocellus*, *Architas*, *Timæus*, who were his Disciples, *Hippocrates*, *Leucippus*, and *Democritus* studied Nature, and wrote thereon more learnedly than others. *Democritus* is one of the greatest Naturalists that ever was; to whom *Aulus Gellius* gives many Elogies. *Empedocles* composed a Natural Philosophy in Verse; according to the Principles of *Pythagoras*, of which *Lucretius* speaks as of a miracle, and whereof *Aristotle* and *Dio- genes Laertius* make mention. *Plato* hath written hardly any thing on this part,

part, which he hath not taken from the *Pythagoreans*. The Opinion of *Democritus*, which had many Followers before and after *Aristotle*, and which is revived by most part of the modern Natural Philosophers of note, is somewhat more real and sensible by the Doctrine of Atoms, than the Opinion of *Aristotle* of Matter, Form, and Privation: but besides that it establishes a Matter, without establishing a Workman, that is to say, an Art without an Artist; that Doctrine which is much the same with that of *Leucippus*, falls into so great absurdities when it is examined to the bottom, that one hath much ado not to reject it. *Socrates* who found that the *Sophists* had abused that part of Philosophy by their false argumentations, took another way and applied himself to Morality. So that what *Plato* brings him in saying of Natural Things, is none of his, as *Xenophon* alledges. The Book of *Theophrastus* on Plants, is in the judgment of *Julius Scaliger*, who hath commented on it, one of the loveliest pieces of

Natural Philosophy, that is to be found in all Antiquity. *Zeno* the head of the *Stoicks* hath nothing particular in his Physicks, but that he explains not himself as others do; though his sentiments be the same. He establishes two Principles, God and Matter: He assigns to the World a Soul so diffused in all the parts thereof, that he makes it a great Animal. *Lipsius* hath abridged the Physicks of this Philosopher, as he hath his Morals. *Epicurus* is uncertain in his Physicks: he takes a singular way of his own in all things. *Cicero* thinks that this Philosopher, having addicted himself to *Democritus*, hath spoiled his Opinion by what he hath changed in it: he taught Natural Philosophy only to secure himself against the fears which Religion occasions. Vacuity and Atoms are the principles of his Physicks. The *Epicureans* little understood the nature of Motion, because they no ways understood the nature of Time and Place, whereof the explication belongs to the Metaphysicks. Notwithstanding of that, *Lucretius* hath preferred *Epicurus* to

to all the other Philosophers, and hath set him off for the greatest man that ever was: as appears by the Elogies which he makes of him in divers places of his Poem; and especially in the beginning of his third Book, where he speaks of him in a strain, wherein never man was spoken of. *Amasianus*, of whom *Cicero* makes mention, maintains nothing different from *Epicurus*, whose Doctrine he describes. *Plutarch* cites a Book of Nature and Natural Beings, composed by *Chrysippus*, which *Favorinus* praiseth much. What remains of the Works of Natural Philosophy written by the *Greeks*, is to be found by shreds in the Fragments of *Diogenes Laertius*. We are promised from *Florence* a Work, whose Author named *Rucelai*, hath collected all that the Ancients have written on that Science; and which he reduced to six and thirty different Systems of Natural Philosophy: But seeing that Work which he hath written in *Italian*, and which contains twelve Volumes, could not come to light before his death, it is to be feared

that it will not yet appear so soon, by reason of the loss that Learning hath sustained by the death of *Cardinal de Medicis*, who alone might have hastened the impression.

## VIII.

Though the *Romans* have not much applied themselves to Natural Philosophy, the honour of which they ought wholly to yield to the *Greeks*; yet there are to be found amongst them learned Works on that subject. There hath been nothing written in *Latine*, in a more polished and purer stile, than the Poem of *Lucretius* on the Philosophy of *Epicurus*; which for the purity of diction *Lambinus* prefers to *Virgil*: but there is no piece more dangerous for Morality. *Cicero*, who understood the Philosophy of the *Grecians*, and wrote of it the best of all the *Romans*, speaks thereof in such a manner, that one cannot tell what opinion he was of: when we take him upright, we find that he addicteth himself to nothing, and that he diverts himself with every thing: but in fine, it is known that

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that *Plato* and *Aristotle* please him better than the rest. *Seneca*, it seems, hath not well observed a Didactick way in his Books of Natural Questions; he makes too subtle Reflexions, where natural simplicity is only necessary: he affects too much to be moral, where he should only be natural. No man hath written more in *Latine* on Natural Philosophy, nor with greater elegancy, than *Pliny*: the sole Idea of his Work is the vastest design that ever entred into the mind of man. He is the universal Historian of Nature, who hath given his opinion of every thing, and well; he hath pickt up a thousand things, that without him would have been lost. But if we consult the sentiment of *Salmasius* in his Observations on *Pliny*, we shall find that that Author hath many times suffered himself to be deceived by those who furnished him with the Memorials of his History; that he hath sometimes lost the way himself, by assaying to go too far; that he hath been too credulous in following the Opinions of others

others, and too hasty to follow his own; that in his Relations he takes sometimes greater care of the beauty of words, than the verity of things; and that the necessity that he found himself in of relying on the credit of others, makes his own to be questioned. Not but that he hath had Patrons in these last Ages, who pretend that most part of the matters which he published, and whereof men heretofore doubted, are found after strict examination to be true. Yet I think we ought to trust more to *Salmasius* than to those others, who hath written more learnedly on *Pliny* than all that have gone before him; and it must be acknowledged, that the work of *Pliny* is too large to be very exact. However his History is one of the most admirable works of antiquity. *Plutarch*, *Dioscorides*, *Elianus* and *Solinus*, every one of them in their own way have by their Books likewise much enriched Natural Philosophy: *Plutarch* is more a Moralist than Naturalist, *Dioscorides* more Physician than Philosopher, *Elianus*



*lianus* a better Historian than Naturalist, and *Solinus* a greater Geographer than observer of Nature. *Galen* hath built upon the Natural Philosophy of *Hippocrates* whom he followed exactly, and hath taken many things from *Pliny*, whose Natural History he studied much. All the other learned of the following ages have divided themselves according to the inclination they have had for *Plato*, or for *Aristotle*; as *Avicenna* and *Averroes* have done: and that was likewise the party which the Schoolmen embraced in the Ages wherein their Sect hath flourished most. But most of them have stuck to *Aristotle*, notwithstanding of the Animosity and Jealousies that set them together by the Ears. The Schools with all the Arrogance which they inspired into their Disciples, have not been so bold for the space of three hundred years, as to teach any thing in Natural Philosophy, which was not conform to the sentiments of *Aristotle*.

I X.

The Modern Natural Philosophy  
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began not to be formed, until the last age. *Galileus* a Florentine Philosopher was the first that conceived such a design, upon the notion that he had of the Principles of *Leucippus*. He was a man of solid wit, who by the perfect knowledge he had of Astronomy and Geometry, hath reasoned better on the nature of Motion, than those that went before him or followed after. He was the first that found out the proportion of the vibrations of suspended weights, and of the acceleration of the motion of heavy bodies in falling, whereof he took the principles from *Aristotle*. He was more a Peripatetick than his Successors: but in reforming the Ancients he hath taken too modern an Air. For he follows the Opinion of *Copernicus* in the Systeme of the World, which he hath reformed: and by the use of the Telescope, he discovered many new Stars, he observed spots in the Sun, he found Mountains and Vallies in the Moon, he observed waxings and waneings in the Planet *Venus*, he shewed great strength

strength in his reasonings, and acquired singular Reputation in *Italy*, where he was in a manner the founder of Modern Philosophy. Thus did *Bacon* awaken the love of Philosophy in his Country. He had a vast genius for Natural Philosophy, but hath in no part which he treated of it, better succeeded, than in his History of Winds: though he hath been a little too credulous as to the memorials which were furnished him on that subject. The rest of his Natural Philosophy is not of the same force; though the Character of his Wit appear therein in all its features: and what he hath written on Nature hath not contributed a little to excite the minds of his Country-men to the love of that Science, and to the study of natural beings, which of late has refflourished in *England*; where he hath found many imitators of the passion he had for Philosophy. The Physicks of *Campanella*, wherein he gives sensation to the most insensible things of nature, whereof he proves all the parts to be animated, is a Vision  
to

to which he was subject. *Teleſius* is of his opinion in his treatiſe againſt *Galen*. He is too bold in his deciſions, he treats *Ariſtotle* often very highly, but without reaſon. *Gilbertus* hath explained the Experiments of the Loadſtone better than any other. *Harvey* has reaſoned the beſt on the progreſs of the generation of Animals, and the circulation of the Blood, as *Promond* hath written the beſt of *Meteors*, *Savot* of Colours, *Merſennus* of Sounds and Harmony, *Willis* of the Brain and its parts, *Grew* of the Anatomy of Plants. *Floid* hath little ſound Reaſon: and he might paſs for the *Paracelſus* of Philoſophers, as *Paracelſus* for the *Floid* of Phyſicians; for they are two Spirits much like one another. *Gaſſendus* hath written well againſt the Natural Philoſophy of *Floid*. *Borellus* is a good Geometrician, and no bad Naturaliſt, but without any principle of Metaphyſick, which makes him not very ſure in his Propoſitions. *Thomas Hobbes* hath ſhewed a great depth of wit in his Phyſicks; but as he is one of the boldeſt *Epicureans* of theſe  
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last Ages, and follows in every thing the principles of *Epicurus*, without any reserve; so hath he reasoned ill about the Mind and its chief Operations, the principle of which he attributes to Phantasms, and the Imagination. *Boile* is a rational person, who hath applied himself to the enriching of Natural Philosophy by his Experiments and Reflexions, which have always an air of solidity. *Gassendus* is but the Restorer of the Physicks of *Epicurus*; which he hath handled by *Galileus* his principles of Motion, wherein he is altogether *Galileist*; and for the rest an *Epicurean* mitigated by a principle of Conscience: for he acknowledges the creation of Atoms, which *Epicurus* denys; he will have God to give them the Motion, Extension and Figure, which *Epicurus* ascribes to themselves: he admits of Providence, which that Philosopher allowed not. In fine, he makes *Epicurus* an honest man, because he is so himself: but never man hath treated *Aristotle* worse, whom he calls ignorant, fool, and

and fancyful, for all he was himself so moderate. As to *Vanbelmont*, who can find nothing rational in *Aristotle's* Physicks, it must be acknowledged his judgment is not great: the truth is *Paracelsus* had infected his Wit.

## X.

Now after all, that we may do justice to our Nation, and to the Memory of *Descartes*, we must acknowledge that his Natural Philosophy is one of the most learned and accomplished pieces of Modern Physicks: In it there are curious Idea's, and quaint Imaginations: and if one mind it well, there is to be found therein a more regular Doctrine, than in *Galileus* or the *English*; and even more novelty and invention than in *Gassendus* himself. In a word, it is a Work whereof the order is well excogitated: his Method is altogether Geometrical, which leads from principles to principles, and from propositions to propositions. However this is to be found fault with in him; That he settles for the principle of a Natural Body, motion, figure and extension,

tenſion, which are much the ſame with the Principles of *Democritus* and *Epicurus*: Whereupon it is ſaid, That Father *Mersenne*, who was his Reſident at *Paris*, having one day given out in an Aſſembly of the Learned, That Monſieur *Deſcartes*, who had gained Reputation by his Geometrie, was projecting a method of Natural Philoſophy, wherein he admitted Vacuity; that project was hiſſed at by *Robertval* and ſome others, who from thenceforwards thought it would prove no great achievement. Father *Mersenne* wrote to him that Vacuity was not then a-la-mode at *Paris*: which obliged *Deſcartes* to deviſe meaſures to keep in good terms with the new Naturaliſts, whoſe ſuffrage he courted, and to admit the plenitude of *Leucippus*: So through policy the excluſion of Vacuity became one of his Principles. This made *Gaſſendus* ſtart new difficulties to him; ſhewing him, that if there were no Vacuity, motion, which was one of his Principles, would be impoſſible: becauſe nothing moves if there be no

Void for it. *Descartes* to salve that inconvenience, invented his thin subtile matter, whereof he made a kind of engine which he applied to many things; and thereby he reconciled the opinion of Plenitude and Vacuity, according as he stood in need of either. But as Plenitude, and that thin subtile matter got place in the Systeme of *Descartes*, meerly out of complaisance to the relish of the Age, and as an after-game; so his Philosophy seemed weak in the matter of motion, which is one of his Principles. For that Philosopher taught that all motion was created with the World, that there was no new motion produced, and that it did no more but shift from one Body to another: That the thin subtile matter by its impulse, caused all the gravity or levity of Bodies: That the alteration of heavy Bodies in their motion towards the center, proceeded from the same impulse: That heat was nothing but the agitation of the particles of the Air put in motion by the subtile matter, which in his

Doctrine



Doctrine was a kind of a Spring fit for all things. That the Vegetation of Plants, and Generation of Animals is performed only by a fortuitous motion of his little Bodies, as a Palace might be erected by a heap of Stones moved by chance: That there is no sensation in Animals: That these Demonstrations of Joy, Sadness, Amity, and Aversion, these impressions of pain and pleasure, that appear in them, are but the effects of a kind of Spring and Engine, that plays according as the matter is disposed: That heat is not in the Fire, hardness in the Marble, humidity in the Water; that these things are only in the Soul, which finds Fire hot, Marble hard, and Water humid, by its thought, and not at all by these qualities, which are but Chymera's. In fine, *Descartes*, who would have us begin, by doubting of every thing, to lay aside all our notices, strip our selves of our Sentiments, of Custom, Education, Opinion, of our very Senses, and all other impressions, that we may but learn some small inconfi-

derable matter, demands more than he promises. And when, to give the reason of things, he says, they happen by a certain Figure, Motion, or Extension, he hath said all; for he dives into nothing, and for all he pretends to be so great a Democritist, he understands not the true Doctrine of *Democritus*. His System of the Loadstone with these little hooked bodies, these hollowed and spiral parts, is without foundation. His opinion of the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, by the impression of the Atmosphere of the Moon, is found false by experience; for the parts of Water that are under the Moon, swell instead of sinking, as he saith. The explication which he gives to all the motions of the Soul in its passions by the Conjunction of Nerves and Fibres which are inserted in the (*glandula pinealis*) is a Dream, for there are no Nerves which terminate at that glandule: he says nothing rational concerning sounds. In fine, it may be said, that he is very like those *Pythagoreans* of whom *Aristotle* speaks, who did

did not so much endeavour to give a reason of the things they explained, as to reduce every thing to their own Principles and System. However, as he made it his business rather to show his Wit, than to discover the truth; so when one is so rational as to be satisfied with probabilities, he may find enough to satisfy himself in that Natural Philosophy: yet that haughtiness of his Disciples, who call all other Philosophers ignorants, is not to be approved of: their minds are dazzled with a new kind of Language, and therefore they make a noise, as all novelties do. The obscurity of his expression encreased the number of his followers; for in matter of Doctrine that is often found to be the best which is least understood.

XI.

The Natural Philosophy of the Chymists with their three principles, Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, hath no Solidity: they are narrow-spirited Philosophers, who being unable to comprehend Universal Philosophy, have stint-

cd themselves to limited Subjects, and thereto stinted their own Genius. They may be reduced to three orders. The first is, of those that pretend to the knowledge of Nature in general: the second, of those who prepare Remedies: and the third, of those who apply themselves to the finding out of the Art of changing of Metals, by giving them either new Figures, new Colours, or new Consistence. The first and second may be rational, as *Albertus Magnus*, *Van Helmont*, and the Distillers are. The third are Extravagant: for to pretend to make new Creatures, is to invade the right of the Creator. As for the Cabalists and Judicial Astrologers, there is nothing more frivolous than their Natural Philosophy: neither shall I speak of the Physicks of *Caydan*, which are all contained in his Books of Subtiltie. But I cannot forbear to take notice, that the Royal Society of *England*; the Academy of Philosophers lately established at *Paris*, by Order of the King; the Cares of the late Cardinal

nal de Medicis, to encourage the Learned by his example, and the new piece of Experiments which he caused within these few years to be Printed at *Florence* ; have so effectually revived the love of Natural Philosophy in the Age we live in, that nothing seems at present more in Vogue amongst the Learned of *Europe* , than that study which now-a-days reigns there Universally. And Men have advanced in it with so much success, that it may be said, that within the space of three-score years, there have been made more new discoveries in Nature, by Experiments, Observations, and the Invention of new Instruments of Astronomy, than had been made for above a thousand years before. For there is found out an Art of observing all the different affections of the Air by the *Thermometer*: there are new Descriptions made of the Moon by a Map, which represents all its Monthly Appearances, and the Variety of the *Phænomena* which the Shadow makes by Eminencies and Concavities like

to Mountains and Valleys: there is found an Art to observe the Course of the Stars, with as great exactness as the Motion of a Watch, or their shadow on a Sun-Dial: and it was in our Age, or but a little before, that Men began to find out Irregularities in the Motion of the Heavens, and Celestial Bodies: that is to say, in the most regular works of Nature that God hath made. In fine, it seems that by that virtuous emulation, which hath been of late raised amongst the Naturalists of *England, France, Italy, and Holland*, the World hath begun to change its Face, the Heavens to move on other principles, and by other Systems, the Air to be more cleared by the knowledge of Meteors, the Sea to become more easie for Commerce by the Science of Navigation, the Earth to be better known by the perfect knowledge of Simples, mixt Bodies, Salts, and Minerals, and all Arts to be enobled by new discoveries: at present there is nothing studied but the finding out of new lights in Sciences, which have been darkned by  
the

the negligence of preceding Ages; and the study of Experiments is raised to a greater height than ever. What shall I say of the wonderful Springs of motion in the Heart, the Circulation of the Blood, the Construction of the Brain, the Universal Oeconomie of the Body of Man, wherein there are so many new secrets found out; of all the rare and late discoveries in Flies and other Insects, whereof the English have composed a great Volume full of Observations, which hitherto have been almost unknown? If with the same ardour they persist in the Study of Nature, by the Observations which they have begun to make in all parts of the World, where their Commerce gives them entrance, they may be able shortly to publish a second Volume of Natural History worthy to be subjoyned to that of *Pliny*. If I pretended to enter into the retail of all that is found out in Nature by study and the application of Modern Philosophy, I should never make an end. But I cannot forget how much that Science is enriched  
by

by the Works of *Monsieur de la Chambre*, chief Physician in Ordinary to the King, who adhering to the Doctrine of *Aristotle* hath written on Physicks, more solidly than others, and in a more florid stile. In so dry and barren matters, there was never so much grace and beauty: and yet his politeness lessens not the force of his reasons, nor does the flourish of his expression take any thing off from the Gravity of his matter. It may be said that he is the politest and most solid of all Modern Philosophers, and that if Nature her self would explain her self, she would use no other terms.

## XII.

It remains now to be observed, that we may put an end to the Reflexions on Natural Philosophy, what it is that may contribute to the perfection of that Art, whereof men are so fond of late, and what may hurt the progress which it so justly makes in the minds of men. As honour and emulation are chiefly the Soul of Arts and Sciences; so they who have a Genius for Natural Philosophy,



sophy, whereof the knowledge is so important for Society, cannot be too much esteemed. Yet they cannot be sufficiently warned to have a care of being surpris'd by new Opinions, without strict examination of them, and of espousing the sentiments of others by a Spirit of Cabal and partiality; they should cast off that Character, as one of the greatest hindrances to the knowledge and discerning of Truth. Let us exhort them to guard themselves by the Use and Experience of Things, that they may prevent pleasant Errours, and lay aside the natural prepossession that men have for their own Opinions: but let us likewise advise them never to be too curious, without some little docility, nor to be too docile, without somewhat of curiosity. For curiosity without submission leads men out of the way; and too great submission without curiosity guides men into ignorance. Let them know that Reason and Experience are the two only ways whereby that Science is acquired: but that Reason without Experience hath  
no

no solidity, as Experience without Reason has no exactness. Let them not amuse themselves to satisfy too much the publick curiosity by Novelties: for it is a vanity of the new Philosophers to make it more their business to say things that are agreeable, than useful. These maxims are to be insinuated to the modern Philosophers, to imprint on their minds that Character of solidity, without which that Science cannot be well handled, wherein there is nothing more to be avoided, than illusion and uncertainty. Moreover, though there be hardly any thing more to be added to the general Physicks, to enrich them with new Principles and Methods, because they consist in a limited perfection: yet it may be said that the special Physicks are of so vast an extent, that there may be always found new ways to raise them to greater perfection. And for all the new Stars that are discovered, there will remain still more to be found out. For that is a Stock, which, though it be so much already drained by the Studies of  
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so many Learned, and by the series of so many Ages, yet will still prove inexhaustible.

XIII.

The last Reflexion which we have to make on this Science, regards the procedure of Naturalists, who in their Reasonings refer all things to Nature, giving it greater vertue than it ought to have, and stretching its power beyond the bounds that the Creator hath prescribed to it. As *Alcindus*, that *Arabian* Philosopher, did heretofore, whom *Averroes* ranks among the greatest wits that ever were; in effect he knew many things: but he made a Treatise wherein he imputed to Nature, what is commonly attributed to Spirits, which are above Nature, that is to say, to Angels and Demons. So did *Peter* of *Apono* and *Pomponatius*, both great sticklers for Nature, pretend that all that happened in sublunary things, was but an effect of Celestial impressions. And as *Galen* referred every thing to the Qualities of Temperament, *Albertus Magnus* to the Specifick Form, *Marci-*  
*cilins*

*lius Ficinus* to Planets ; so *Peter* of *Apo-*  
*no* referred every thing to the Vertue of  
Celestial Bodies, and acknowledged no  
other Miracles but the changes of Sea-  
sons, as *Du Loyer* assures us. This gave  
occasion to *Baptista* of *Mantua* to call  
him, *Virum magna sed nimium audacis*  
*sapientie* ; a great Philosopher, but of  
too great boldness. That is the common  
infirmity of stinted Spirits, that believe  
nothing but what they comprehend.  
*Montanus* seems to be a Philosopher of  
this Character : he is often incredulous,  
through a desire of being too much a  
Naturalist ; and he is the more dange-  
rous for Religion, the more he affects  
not to appear so. For by the ingenuity of  
plain common sense, and of too civil a  
Philosopher, he works greater effects on  
mens minds, with his negligent way of  
saying what he says. The Natural Phi-  
losophy of *Descartes* raises not the  
Mind above the Senses : by Bodies alone  
he explains the most spiritual operations  
of the Soul : and an *Englishman* of late  
hath made appear, that in all the Rea-  
sonings of that Philosopher there is a  
mechanical

mechanical air that reduces every thing to the method of Art; for which he thinks it dangerous to Religion. But speaking generally, Natural Philosophy, Medicine, Astrology, and Chymistry, stick too much to Nature, to raise men to him who is the Author thereof: they allow too much to the Senses, to make men able to get above Sense; and they harden the heart against the belief of God, by accustoming men to consider things by too low a view. Unhappy are the Philosophers of that Genius, who subtilize on the Knowledge of the Creature, and stick at the belief of the Creator. That was not the Character of the ancient Philosophers, who had not only higher thoughts than we, but raised themselves above themselves, that they might acknowledge a Sovereign Reason, which they made the Rule of all their Reasonings, and to which they submitted their minds. In fine, that we may make an end, let us observe our selves in the judgments we make of Nature, and judge of it with reverence, let us not decide too boldly

boldly on its operations, whereof Man ought never to judge but with trembling. For to be short, to censure Nature is to censure God whose work it is, and to submit the greatness of his Power to our Criticks. Wherein that Prince seemed Extravagant, that would have reformed the Fabrick of the World by a false Gusto of Philosophy, which he had learnt from the *Arabians*. True Philosophy, when it hath attained to its highest pitch of perfection, judges of every thing with fear; it shakes when it comes to decide, because it knows its own incapacity, by knowing the weakness of the mind of man. But when it considers the Works of God, it imposes silence on its Reason, and bends downwards all its knowledge, as the Cherubims of the Prophet fold their Wings, and humble themselves before God, that by their own humiliation they may reverence the greatness of his Majesty.

*The end of the Fourth Part.*

Reflexions

# Reflexions

ON

*The Metaphysicks.*

I.



Natural Philosophy is the knowledge of natural and sensible things: and Metaphysicks is the Science of things purely intellectual. All other Sciences have a dependance on this; for it serves them for Foundation and Method, and without it there is nothing known but imperfectly. That is perhaps the Reason which obliged *Aristotle* to call that Science the true beginning of Philosophy, and the noblest of Sciences. As it is taken up only about the thoughts, by a view  
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abstracted from corporeal and incorporeal beings, so it raises it self above sense and matter: it leaves the quantity of Bodies to the consideration of Geometry, and their other qualities to Natural Philosophy; that it may imploy it self only about being separated from their Individual Singularity, such as are Substances, Accidents, Relations, Oppositions, and all that can be conceived by an abstraction from Matter: and that it may only consider beings that are purely spiritual, such as, the Soul, Spirits, Angels, and even God himself: wherein it hath something of Divinity. It is for that Reason also that *Aristotle* calls it Divinity or Natural Theology. The end of this Science is the finding out of pure and abstracted Verity: thereby it perceives things in their original, that it may know them to the full: it enters into the retail of all particular Species, which it reduces to their principles; and that retail is almost infinite: this is the Reason that without it all the knowledges of man are but superficial and imperfect, because



because there is not almost any true demonstration without its Principles.

II.

The design of *Aristotle* in his *Metaphysicks* is to give Principles to other Sciences, which they cannot have of themselves; and to establish a principal vertue, which might serve for a Rule to all other Verities. That Philosopher hath written twelve Books of *Metaphysicks*, whereof the three first are preliminary to that Science. In the first Book he teaches, that Memory is formed from Sense, Experience from Memory, and Art and Science together from Experience. He shews that Sapience being a perfect knowledge of the first Principles, is preferable to Science; that nothing is known as it should be but by the causes; and that the ancient Philosophers have sometimes said well, without knowing the reason why, because they were not methodical in their Science. He teaches that the impressions receiv'd from Education and Custom are great hinderances to the knowledge of Truth; and

that to know a-right, we must seek out the method most convenient for the Science we inquire into. He declares in his third Book, That to begin to know we must begin to doubt: and that to know Truth a-right, we must know Falsity and Untruth: There he refutes those that explain Nature by Fables, designing thereby *Pythagoras* and *Plato*. In the same Book he examines if one Science may propose all other Sciences for its object. He ends with the Notion that he gives of Substance; and enquires if there be any other Substances besides what fall under our Senses, such as Ideas and first Matter. Having made this preparation of Questions necessary to his design, he treats in the fourth Book of the Principle object of Metaphysicks, which is *Being*, abstracted from Matter, in so much as it is *Being*. In the fifth Book he explains the various Attributes of *Being*, and gives a general notion of the terms of Metaphysicks. The sixth Book is another Preliminary to the following Books. In the seventh  
Book

Book he explains the Nature of Substance, which is the first of *Beings*, what is essential to it, and wherein it differs from an *Accident* : In the eighth Book he distinguishes it into Substance material and Substance immaterial. There it is that he speaks of the Substantial Form, of the Numbers of *Pythagoras*, and the Ideas of *Plato*, which he pretends to be no-ways substantial. The ninth Book is an Explication of the different kinds of *Being*, of the *Being* actual and the *Being* possible, of the Act and the Power, *Actus* and *Potentia*, of the notion and difference thereof; and ends the Book by a Discourse of True and False. In the tenth Book he tells what Unity is, which is the first property of a *Being*, he shews the opposition between Plurality and Unity, he explains how and how many ways one thing is contrary to another, and all the Doctrine of Contraries, which is the ground of the most part of the Principles of Metaphysicks. In the eleventh Book he repeats a great many things already laid down in

the third and fourth Books, and amongst others, the Method of right doubting, to attain to right knowing: for he that doubts hath a greater disposition to know Truth, than he that doubteth not: because he grounds not the assurance of his judgement, but upon the clearing of his uncertainties. Having proved Substantial Forms, he teaches in the twelfth Book that there are Substances separate from Bodies, and that there are Spirits. All that Discourse tends to the demonstration of a first Mover, and to the establishment of a Deity. The two following Books were not come to light in the time of *Thomas Aquinas*. *Possevin* in the third Book of his Bibliothek pretends that they are none of *Aristotle's*: but seeing there is to be found in them the same Character, the same Wit and the same reasoning. all the Learned are of a contrary opinion. It is true, that in his thirteenth Book there are repetitions about the Numbers of *Pythagoras*, and the Idea's of *Plato*: But the fourteenth Book is a Collection of Axioms, Principles,

ciples, Divisions and admirable Definitions, which he hath gather'd out of the former Books. And though his *Metaphysicks* be rank'd in no very exact order, and that in many places thereof there be several repetitions; it is notwithstanding a fountain fertile in Notices, Reasonings, Maxims, and Verities, which are rare overtures for other Sciences: and there is nothing more necessary for a Philosopher, who would know things intimately, than the *Metaphysicks* of *Aristotle*.

III.

What is more to be wondered at in this Work, *Aristotle* is the first Founder of that manner of Reasoning by way of abstraction, and of speaking of Immaterial Beings, of Spirits, and of God himself. For the Philosophers that went before him, spake of such things with little solidity. It is true *Pythagoras* learnt from the *Hebrews*, by the commerce that he had with the *Egyptians*, the Unity of one God, and taught it the *Grecians*. But as the *Egyptians* were naturally mysterious and visionists;

*Pythagoras* took from them the most part of their Visions, concerning Spirits and Intelligences, to which the *Egyptians* assigned little subtile Bodies, wherewith they filled the World. And *Pythagoras* was the first who by that imagination gave occasion to all the extravagancies of the *Cabalists* about Spirits, and to all these Fables, whereof the Author of the *Cabalis* hath endeavour'd to renew the Notion in these last times. *Plato*, who seems to lay down that Doctrine in his Dialogues of *Epinomis* and *Cratylus*, took it from *Pythagoras*, and *Zeno* the *Stoick* had it from *Plato*, as *Lipsius* relates at length. *Apuleius* pretends that *Plato* of all the Ancient Philosophers, hath discoursed best of God, of Providence, of divine matters, and of Spirits. It must be granted that he appears more knowing in that kind of Science than any of the rest; but seeing he learnt of *Pythagoras* most part of what he delivers on that subject, it is not sure to follow him. *Tertullian* says, That the *Platonists* assign'd even a Body to God, as well

well as the *Stoicks*. *Aristotle*, who had more reality in his thoughts, speaks in another strain. He had the Art to purge the Verities that he learnt in the School of *Pythagoras* from the raveries of the *Pythagoreans*. As for *Epicurius* he makes Gods of so ridiculous a shape, that by owning of them he overthrows them. *Zeno* makes his Wise-man so independant of Providence, and so equal to the Gods, that thereby he renders them contemptible: For he leaves Men to think of them what-ever they please. *Chrysippus* wrote some Treatises of the Gods and a Deity; whereof *Plutarch* speaks in his Morals; but they are lost: It is probable he speaks no otherways of them, but in the sentiments of *Zeno*. There is nothing in all Antiquity so rationally written on that subject, as the Books of *Cicero* concerning the Nature of the Gods. His sentiments are as right, and his doctrine as sound, as the Doctrine of a *Pagan* can be. But that which makes him speak better than others is, because he followed the Doctrine of *Aristotle*, and made use of his argu-

arguments, to prove a Providence. *Seneca* speaks of a Deity but like a half-knowing man; the Idea that he gives of God, as an universal Spirit that animates the World, is not exact: but it seems reasonable what he says, that the same injury is done to the Gods, not at all to believe them, as to believe them to be other than what they are, and what they should be. All that hath been written since by the later *Platonists* under the Emperours carries no solid character. The most part of the *Greek Fathers*, who were all almost *Platonists*, are not exact in what they say of Angels and Spirits, by reason of the false notions that they learn'd in the School of *Plato*. Since the establishment of Christianity, the Existence of God, the Immortality of the Soul, its state of Separation from the Body, good and bad Angels, and the other most essential truths of our Religion are so illustrated, that none can now doubt thereof without impiety. *Pomponatius* in the last Age, wrote a Treatise of the Soul in a strain that drew upon him the censures of  
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of *Rome*. *Agrippa* speaks like an extravagant in all the discourse which he made of God, Religion, and Intelligences, in the third Book of his Secret Philosophy. *Ramus* exceedingly slighted the Metaphysicks, wherein he seems not very judicious. He would have joyn'd to the Body of Philosophy, the knowledge of the Liberal Arts, that he might more securely cut off the Metaphysicks. But amongst that fearful multitude of Writings hatch'd in the dust of the Schools of these last Ages, there hath been nothing composed with greater penetration and capacity, than the Metaphysicks of *Suarez*, the *Jesuit*. That piece, which contains all the subtilty and force of the Schools, is one of the wonderful productions of these last times. It cannot be too much recommended to young Divines, who by a false appetite to a new method forsake the Scholastick way in their disputes, that they may become Historians: because it is less trouble to them to make an ostentation of their memory, than to give proofs  
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of their judgement. There hath been in these last times a croud of Commentatours, who in a profound stile have written on the Metaphysicks of *Aristotle*: amongst others *Fonseca* a Portuguese Jesuit. Sir *Kene'm Digby* is too abstract in his Treatise of the Immortality of the Soul. The Metaphysical Meditations of *Descartes* have been held in reputation; for he hath dived into these matters more than others. In his first Meditation he teaches man to doubt well, that he may know a-right: he proves in the second, that the Thought is more sensible and better known than the Body. The third is a Demonstration of the Existence of God. The fourth, a Method of discerning of Truth and Falshood. The fifth treats of the Essence of material Beings. The sixth explains their Existence: and the Conclusion is a real Distinction betwixt the Body and the Thoughts, for the establishing that great Principle, *I think, therefore I am*; to which may be added his Answers to the Objections of *Gassendus*, which have

have the same force as the rest of his Works. *Willis* an *English* Physician hath written rationally of *Separated Forms*. There are not many Works composed in these last times of such a nature: wherein the Speculations of Natural Philosophy take up the minds of men, more than those of Metaphysicks. It were to be wished that men would employ them in subjects that are capable thereof: but the Idea and Design of some Speculatives is not to be approved, who mingle too much Metaphysicks with Religion: which ought to be handled more plainly, and in a less abstracted manner than other subjects; because there is nothing more real, nor more simple.

IV.

Though this Science be so much enquired into already by the Works I have been speaking of, yet it might still be more improved by Reflexions that might be made on the Principles and Reasonings of *Aristotle*, because what consists in Conceptions and Ideas cannot be limited: but there is  
need

need of a disposition proper for Reflexion and reasoning in such an essay: for that Science reasons, and reflects on its reasonings more than others. Yet it meets likewise with great Obstacles in its procedure; whereof the first is, that it marches (to use the word) by ways not much frequented, and by unknown paths, having nothing sufficiently established; for it hath hardly any true Definition, or exact and compleat Division: and seeing it gives occasion to many doubtings, it furnishes Matter of Dispute, there being none of the Principles thereof that can be universally agreed upon. The second obstacle is the natural timidity of the mind of man, which looks upon Metaphysicks, being abstracted from Matter and Sense, to be above its strength: whereby it becomes like to those timorous and ill-assured Travellers, who go by ways that they know not. The third Obstacle is, a great number of hard and barbarous Terms, obscure and perplexed Definitions, thousands of Concep-  
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tions and Reasonings hatched in the Dust of the Schools, which render that Science destitute of the usual Charms of other Sciences. The fourth is a stock of wrangling, and a heap of thorny and displeasing Questions, fitter to confound than instruct the mind. The last Obstacle is, ~~the~~ rarity of Spirits fit for that Science. Spirits that are either too profound or too superficial are not proper for it. By the too great profoundness of meditation men are apt to fall into a black and melancholick Philosophy: as it happened to *Agrippa* in his *Metaphysicks*. And by the vivacity of an aiery and superficial wit, they are apt to evaporate in empty and spongie imaginations: as it befel *Cardan*, who wandered among the Visions of the most chymical Philosophy in the World; and as it happens daily to wits that have no foundation. There hath lately come abroad a Treatise of *Metaphysicks*, printed at *London*, and composed by *Henry More*, which overturns all the Reasons that *Descartes* makes use of to prove the existence of God, and  
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which overthrows the most part of his Meditations. That were no great matter, if that *English* Philosopher did not wound *Descartes* in his Religion, when he declaims against his Natural Philosophy, which he would have pass for Libertinism, as well as that of Mr. *Hobbes*. The *Cartesians*, who are jealous of the honour of their opinion, have Reason to make their zeal flash out against that Author, by justifying the reputation of their Master. There might be a great many other Reflexions made, if these Metaphysical Ideas were not so obscure. Let us now see, before we end this discourse, what is the use that is to be made of Philosophy in matters of Religion, which ought indeed to be all the fruit of it. For men are not over tender of Religion, when once they become Philosophers.

*The end of the fifth Part.*

Reflexions

# Reflexions

ON

*The Use which is to be made*

OF

## PHILOSOPHY,

IN

*Matters of Religion.*

I.



The first Instrument that Religion makes use of to prove its maxims, is Reason; and Reason cannot be rightly employed but by Philosophy, which reduces it into method by giving it principles. It is therefore important

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that Philosophy it self should be sound, that it may stamp a right Character on the mind, and conduct it securely in a way, which one cannot mistake or lose without Eternal Ruine. And therefore it is that *Lactantius* says, that Philosophy is of great use to a Man, when he hath once got some Tincture of Religion. But Men may easily abuse so advantageous a means, by the bad use that the mind of Man may make of it, when it yields to the conduct of passion, interest, or prejudices. This made *Callicles* in *Plato* say, that Philosophy taken the wrong way was able to spoil Religion. There is therefore great circumspection to be used as to that. Faith is an Heavenly Unction, that will easily corrupt in a mind infected with false Doctrine. And as any Liquor would be soon spoiled in an impure Vessel: so nothing is more capable to alter the purity of Religion, than the impurity of sentiments wherewith it is received. It is not that one must needs be a Philosopher, to be a Christian, nor that the Wisdom of the  
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World is a rule to the Wisdom of Heaven. But that the reason of Man being submitted to Faith; Faith how Divine soever it be, condescends to make use of Humane Reasoning, to bring Reason to its Obedience. So that it cannot be absolutely pure, if Philosophy, which is the Instrument that it makes use of, be not so likewise. This obliged St. Paul to admonish the Primitive Christians to beware, *lest any Man should spoil them through Philosophy, and vain Deceit, through the Traditions of Men, according to the Rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*) The World was so infected with the different opinions of so many Philosophers, that a Christian needed all his Wits about him to guard himself from that danger. For Tertullian observes, that the Primitive Heresies sprang only from the opinions, wherein those that were the Authours of them had been bred. Philosophy ill understood, saith St. Augustin, made the Egyptians Worship the Sun and Stars. The Valentinians, against whom St. Irenaeus

writes, came out of the School of *Diogenes* and *Epicurus*; the Gnosticks out of *Plato's*; and the Manichees out of that of *Pythagoras*. *Martian* became Heretick by the Doctrine of *Zeno*; and *Manes* took the principles of his opinion from a Saracen Philosopher, whom *St. Epiphanius* mentions. *St. Jerome* assures us that it was the Morality of the Stoicks that made the Pelagians fall into error. But what happened in the Primitive Ages by that manner of dependance which Religion hath on Philosophy, is come to pass in the last. *Possevin* observes, that it is incredible how many Libertines and Hereticks the reading of *Averroes* made in *Europe*. *Alphonfus* King of *Castile* censured the Workmanship of God, by Criticising on Nature, and grew impious by the study of the Arabian Philosophers; and by the pleasure he took in the ravings of a Spanish Jew, who found out the motion of Trepidation in the Firmament. *Agrippa* spoiled his spirit by the reading of *Porphyrus*, *Proclus*, and *Plessus*, that is to say, by the Phi-

Philosophy of *Plato*, as he himself confesses. *Cervetus* a Spaniard, and *Socinus* an Italian, made only use of Philosophy, to make Innovations in Religion. And it is pretended that the Philosophy of *Descartes* was at first well received in the North, because it seemed to favour the opinion of *Calvin*, which is in greatest Vogue there: for the principles of that new Philosophy lead a Man to believe that the Creature in its freest Actions, acts only by the impulse of the Creator, and that it is God alone that wills in the willings of Man. In fine, nothing tends more to the corruption of the Heart, than the corruption of Doctrine, and there is nothing that overthrows Religion, so much as the vain Reasonings of a false Philosophy. It is not by the School of Errour and Lying, that one becomes a Disciple of truth: neither was it by the inconstancy and levity of Humane Opinions, that the Apostles became the Pillars of Faith. That was also the reason that moved the Fathers in some

counsels, to order the Professors of Philosophie not to teach any Doctrines that were prejudicial to Religion.

## II.

It much concerns a Christian then, not to make use indifferently of every kind of Philosophy, seeing the use of it may prove so dangerous: it is even Prudence to make sure in the choice that is to be made amongst so many different opinions, as have passed current in all Ages. But what assurance is there amidst so many clouds wherein Truth is commonly wrapped up? to which may be added the obscurity of Natural things; the weakness of the Spirit of Man; the erroneoufness of the Judgement of the Senses naturally Impostrous: in a word, Opinion and Passion, which are perpetual hindrances to Natural evidences; as well as all these idle and curious Speculations, to which Philosophers are subject, & which serve more for ostentation and the Pomp of Science, than the conduct of the Mind, and edification of manners. Whence appears how empty and vain Humane  
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Wisdom is, whereof all the Light can only serve to seduce and lead Men out of the way : Because, saith *St. Augustin*, God hath concealed Truth from Man, as well for the punishment of his crime, as to instruct him of his misery. Wherefore that we may not mistake our selves, let us begin to study what is to be believed, before we set our selves on Reasoning. Let us regulate the use of our Faith, that we may regulate the use of our Reason: let us be Christians before we be Philosophers: let our first Wisdom and our chief Philosophy be our Religion. Men learn to reason by Philosophy; but they learn to submit their minds to Reason and eternal Verity, by Christianity. Let us know the duties thereof by the study of the Law, which is, says *St. Chrysostom*, the rule of Knowledge and Truth: That we may learn that method of Reasoning which may be most suitable to it, let us apply our selves to the Doctrine of the Gospel, which the pride of Pagan Philosophers could never comprehend, and our Reason will settle it self upon so

solid a foundation: because there is nothing but Faith, that can give bounds to the mind of Man, stay the inconsistency of his Reason, and fix it on its object. Let us not expose our selves to the agitation of our vain Reasonings, which are apt to carry us further than we should go. Happy is he, who amidst the waves of this Sea, which is always tossed with the errors and opinions in Religion that reign in the World, hath taken the course to stick close to the immoveable foundation of the Word of God.

## III.

Religion is then the first Principle according to which Humane Wisdom is to take its measures: so that all the different methods of ancient or modern Philosophy, all the new Systems of Natural, and all the new Maxims of Moral Philosophy, may be good, if they be not contrary to it. For the Gospel ought to be the rule of our sentiments. What is not conform to that Rule, leads to disorder. The Doctrine of *Plato* or *Aristotle*, *Gassendus* or *Descartes*, is not to be esteem'd, but in so much

as it favours Religion; which should be the first of all Philosophies. Let us forsake all the rest, for all other Sciences are but illusion, and every other Light but a transitory flash, fitter to amuse our curiosity than to satisfy our mind. To speak properly, we know things but as in dream, and are ignorant of them in effect: Yea, and we would pity our own ignorance, if our vanity kept it not from our Knowledge. The most frivolous Question in the World, divided all the minds of Antiquity: and after almost three thousand Years of dispute, it is not as yet well decided. *Thales* and his Disciples until *Plato*, says *Plutarch*, have denied a Vacuity in Nature, those that follow'd after, to begin with *Democritus* and *Epicurus*, and to continue until our new Atomists, have taught it. Men dispute thereon still every day, and come to no agreement. That degree of Certainty, which was heretofore with so many Reasonings sought for in the Academy, tended only to uncertainty. In fine, the knowledge of Man staggers always in doubting and hesitation;  
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and Truth is only come into the World by *JESUS CHRIST*. Faith alone can teach that Divine Philosophy, which none of the Great Men of the World have been able to know. To open our Eyes to so pure a Light is the way to be illuminated. It was not by the force of Syllogisms and Arguments that Men were convinced of that Philosophy; but by the Simplicity and Ignorance of those that published it in the World: the *Greeks* and *Romans* submitted all their pride and haughtiness of mind to the Gospel; whose vertue was so powerful, that it made its First-Disciples its greatest Voraries. It is Faith then, which ought to make all the Wit and Knowledge of man: for he that shall follow his own Understanding, will undoubtedly lose himself.

## IV.

Faith having undeceived man of the counterfeit glitterings, which shined in the Philosophy of the Heathens, it accustomed him to dispute no more about those things, which God hath not submitted to Reasoning, and taught him  
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that it is better not to know what God hath thought fit to conceal from him, and with a reverent ignorance to adore the Secrets, which he hath not revealed to us, than to undertake to sound that Abyſs of knowledge, by the rashness of our conjectures, and the faint views of our Reason. To this Divine beam of Faith, the Faithful took pleasure to sacrifice all these insolent curiosities, which made them too rashly examine the works of God, by examining of Nature; and to stifle all the prospects of that proud Reason, which addict them to the Creature, to make them revolt against the Creatour. It was by the rays of that most Heavenly Light, that the Christian came to understand that it was better to be submissive, than to reason in matters of Religion; that the smallness of Wit was somewhat more advantageous to make a man a Believer, than all the force and acuteness of Understanding; and that the simplicity of Faith was preferable to all the lustre and reputation of Science; because that the works of God,  
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which carry the greatest marks of his Omnipotency and Character, are those which we least understand: so that there is nothing more reasonable than to humble Reason, and to submit it to the direction of Eternal Reason, which is the Rule of all other Reasons; and the rather, seeing that there is no kind of Science, which depends not on submission, that it may settle it self by its Principles. Is it just that Men should exercise a kind of tyranny upon our belief and upon our minds, for things indifferent, such as are Arts and Sciences, and that we should take our freedom as to Religion? We are told things incomprehensible in the name of *Descartes*, from which we reap no advantage; we take them on their bare word: And having most credible Mysteries delivered to us in the Name of God, which assures us of Eternal Life, shall we not believe them? V.

When Reason is once submissive, Philosophy which is its rule may be useful to explain it. That is the first use that is to be made of Philosophy in Religion. So it was that *Anatolius B. of Laodicea*, S.

*Jerom*

*Ferom, S. Augustin, Theodoret, Didymus of Alexandria, Boetius, S. John Damascen,* and many others, began first amongst Christians to give vogue to the Philosophy of *Aristotle*: which afterwards was continued by the Fathers and Divines in the Church, to defend the Christian Religion against Paganism and Heresie. And though our Religion be not grounded on human Reasoning, but on the simplicity of a pure Faith, which is always opposite to the weak and corrupt mind of Man: yet it is lawful to underprop that Faith by all the force of Human Reason, when once it hath begun to give law unto Reason. And so does God Almighty, who draws light out of darkness, speak to us by the Mouth of Men, as by the most proportionate instrument to the weakness of our Understandings: and yet that Instrument diminishes nothing of the Dignity of him that employes it. The most profane Creatures are as so many voices which publish the Glory and Holiness of the Creatour; and what is even most stupid and dumb in Nature serves to instruct us in the knowledge of God:  
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and shall not the words, the reason, the terms and expressions of *Aristotle*, be made use of by us in speaking of Religion, because they are the words and expressions of an Heathen? What reason have we to boggle at them, after that all the Learned and Pious Men, who knew and lived in the purity of Christian Religion as well, if not better than we, have so employed them; let us stick to a Custom Authorized to us by the example of these Holy Men. And whatever may be objected to us, let us never give cavelling Atheists, and the Enemies of our Religion, the satisfaction to change the Language of the Church, by the use of new Philosophies, which Men would bring in credit; seeing that the Ancient Philosophy, besides terms of Explaining, may likewise furnish Religion with a Method of Reasoning.

VI.

Besides the terms and method which Philosophy may furnish Religion with, to serve it as an Instrument in what it thinks and says, it may likewise afford it reasons, to arm those that defend it, and disarm its Adversaries. It was Philosophy that first began to open the great Book of the World, for an instruction to the Learned, and Unlearned and by the beauty of the Creatures, to declare to all the Nations of the World, the Greatness and Power of the Creator. It was she that by her Lessons raised the Spirit of Man from the Knowledge of so many wonders, to the knowledge of their Original, by discovering to him the Cause of these admirable Effects. It was Philosophy which made Man understand that voice of the Heavens and Stars, which declare the Glory of God, that he might come to the knowledge of his greatness. By that marvellous succession of Day and Night, by that constant and uniform revolution of Seasons, by that Order and Harmony of Elements, and of all  
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the parts that compose the Universe ; as by the loud sound of a Trumpet, that Science published the Divinity of so great a Master , by exposing to view the lineaments of so perfect a work. It was Philosophy in fine, which taught *Pythagoras, Hippocrates, Socrates, Plato,* and *Aristotle* , who were the solidest Heads of Antiquity, the Unity of the Godhead ; whereof they themselves were convinced by the bare and simple contemplation of this great Theatre of the World. But that which served to instruct these Great Men in so important a truth, served only to puzzle and confound the proud minds of a great many stunted Souls, who, as *St. Paul* says , became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was full of darkness, and when they professed themselves to be wise , became Fools: because they rendred to the Creature, the Honours that were only due to the Creator ; by the wrong use that they made of their Reason and Philosophy. They applied themselves to the study of Nature, without reverencing

rencing the Authour thereof. Thus it hapned with *Epicurus*, who pretended that Natural Philosophy was fit for nothing but to stifle all these kinds of fears which the impressions of Religion may cause in the Soul. On the contrary *Plato* made use of Natural Philosophy only to prove the existence of God, by the existence of the World: as a Workman is known by his Work. And *Aristotle* reduces almost all his reasonings about motion, to that admirable demonstration of a first mover, which *Avicenna* takes to be one of the most evident demonstrations of the Physicks of that Philosopher. So true it is, that it is but only an infirmity of mind, that makes Men so uneasily believe what is proposed to them by Religion. For when one hath reason, it is no trouble to him to use it, by subjecting the same in such subjects, where it ought to be submissive.

## VII.

These are the chief uses that may be made of Philosophy in matters of Religion; wherein it may likewise give weight to the Reasonings that are employed for establishing the maxims thereof: it may serve to unmask Impostures, the error whereof disguises it self under so many different shapes: it may repress that immoderate liberty, which the Wise of the World take to themselves of inquiring too curiously into matters which exceed their capacity: it teaches Reason not to startle at things which seem most incredible, when it hath once been able to make it perceive the Authority of God, by reviewing these admirable Idea's of the Virtue of the Gospel; wherewith a small number of Fisher-men by their simplicity triumph over all the Wisdom of *Athens* and *Rome*, and by their Patience and Humility render themselves Masters of the Mistress of the World. In this manner it was that *Origen*, who thought himself obliged, as *Eusebius* assures us,

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to justify his conduct in his application to the study of Pagan Philosophers, as not unbeseeming a Christian, made use of Philosophy, and gave even rules how to use it, by shewing Christians, that Men ought only to be Philosophers, to settle themselves in the Faith, and therein to become impregnable: by the same principle assuring them, that Philosophy ought not to be considered, but as an Instrument of Religion. What he explained to them by that judicious reflection, was the same that *St. Clement* of *Alexandria* had done before him: saying, that it seemed God was pleased to give a pattern of that conduct, by what he inspired into the Israelites, when he ordered them to make use of the riches and spoils of *Egypt*, to adorn the things that concerned Religion and his Worship. For *Origen* recommended nothing so much to the Christian Philosophers, as the reading of the Holy Scriptures; and to read them with an attention suitable to the Heavenly Truths which so Divine Books contained, that they might attain to the knowledge of Sa-

cred Myſteries, by ſinglenefs of heart and humility of mind. And inſtead of diſputing about Religion, as Men diſpute about indifferent things in the Schools, he would have Men adore with reverence the Majeſty of Holy Myſteries, and believe incomprehenſibility with ſubmiſſion. Thus it was, that that Learned Man made uſe of prophane Sciences, and Secular Philoſophy to guide his Diſciples to Jeſus Chriſt, and to raiſe them to Faith, as *St. Jerom* aſſures us.

## VIII.

Theſe Terms, that Method, and theſe Reaſons, which Philoſophy may furniſh Religion with, would not be ſufficient, if it did not likewise give it a kind of diſcretion, to prepare the mind to the Light of Faith, by the Light of Nature, which is the firſt principle of the operation of the Soul. For it happens that Man is often deceived, and that unhappineſs may proceed, ſaith *St. Auguſtin*, from the weakneſs of his Heart, though it proceeded not from the wickedneſs and preſumption of his  
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his mind. And seeing the Philosopher is more subject to that than the simple ignorant, that Holy Father concludes in the same place, that Man should not become a Philosopher, but that he may think on Eternity which is his end: That gave occasion to *Thomas Aquinas* to begin his Treatise of Religion against the *Gentiles*, by this Question, *what is the Obligation of the wise Man*, and the chief duty of a Philosopher: and he concludes, that it is to *search the Verity, which is the Original of all Verities*, as he proves by the Testimony of *Aristotle*. That was likewise the chief study of the Primitive Christians, who were Philosophers: and not only made use of their Philosophy to find out the Truth of Religion: but likewise to teach it to those who were ignorant thereof, and to defend it against those that attacked the same. In that manner did *St. Justin*, *Tatian* his Disciple, *Athenagoras*, and *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who were the first Philosophers of the Christian Religion, employ their Philosophy to

maintain their Faith, by justifying their Conduct against the Calumnies of Pagans, and overthrowing the false notions that were put into the minds of the people. In that manner *Tertullian* made his Zeal manifest in that admirable Apology, which he made of Religion; where amongst so many other reasons, which so just a cause as that which he handled might furnish him with, the life of Christians was one of the chief; that life so pure, so holy, so far above sense; that fidelity, disinterestedness and Charity wherewith all their actions were animated, which made them pray for those that persecuted them. And in fine, their innocence served him as a living Image of the Holiness of the Gospel they preached, to stop the mouth of Error and Imposture. *Origen* took another Method against *Celsus*, who having been a Jew turned Pagan. He proves the Verity of Christianity by the Divinity of Jesus Christ: by making appear, that nothing is objected against Jesus Christ, which may not be objected against *Moses*. Seeing that Jesus Christ, cannot be the fulfilling of  
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the Law; as he is, but it must the strongest proof of the Authority of the Law-giver. For, if he be not the Truth, the Law and all the Prophets are but a Lie. St. *Hippolitus* makes use of another Argument: *Ye cannot conceive*, says he to Un-believers, *the manner how ye are formed, and ye dare pretend to know the Eternal Generation of the Son of God.* It is not by curiosity, but by submission that one becomes a Believer. Faith manifests its Light only to him who can blind his reason: and for all its obscurity, it deserves adoration even of those who understand it not. Among the other Arguments of *Minutius Felix*, there is not any stronger than this: The belief of an Infidel leading only to doubting and uncertainty, he should do as does a Traveller, who finds himself amongst many ways, and knows not the right. If he be wise he stops, not daring to follow any of them in the doubt that he is in, and being unable to follow them all: which Libertines do not, who having no other ground

for their Libertinism, but their uncertainty ; yet still pursue the wrong way and persist in their Error , being unable to take the resolution, which the sillyest people do in their most ordinary affairs, not to act on any doubt ; for it is prudence to endeavour to be sure in what one doeth. It is upon the Vanity and Falsity of Idols, and the extravagance of the Pagan Religion, that *St. Cyprian*, *Arnobius* , *Lactantius* his Scholar, *Eusebins* Bishop of *Cesarea*, and *St. Cyril* of *Alexandria* established the Christian Religion. The Treatise of *Theodoret* concerning Providence, and *St. Augustins* Book of the City of God, are most Learned and Solid Apologies for our Faith , full of profound Learning and admirable Eloquence. And this was the way that all the Fathers almost employed their Science and Philosophy, every one in his own Method to defend Christian Religion, which was attacked by all the violence of the powers of the Earth ; by all the Learning of Pagan Philosophers , and by all the wickedness of Hereticks.

IX.

But as the primitive Christians were more taken up to defend their Religion against its Enemies, and to be always ready for Martyrdom by a pure and holy Life, than to unfold the Mysteries of our Faith: so the most part of the ancient Apologists contented themselves to justify their Belief against the calumnies that were raised against it, without explaining the ground of their Religion, that they might not profane holy things, by discovering them to Infidels, It was necessary in the Infancy of the Church to veil from the World corrupted with Idolatry, the new Spirit of our Faith, whereof the Pagans were not capable. But since our Eyes in these last Ages have been accustomed to the light of the Gospel, it hath been thought more fit to unfold the Sanctity of our August mysteries, than to obscure them under ambiguous terms; and this hath been the course that the later Apologists have follow'd. *Thomas Aquinas* in his Work against the Gentiles, shews in the first three Books  
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of it, That there is nothing in the Christian Faith but what is conform to the light of Nature: and in the fourth he teaches, that though it be highly elevated above the wit of Man, yet it contains nothing contrary to Reason. *Savonarola* hath gathered all that is solid in the Fathers on that subject: to which he hath added this argument which is properly his own. If our Religion be not true, a Christian is the most monstrous thing in Nature: he is wise and a fool at the same time; wise in his manners, a fool in his Belief: his mind is erroneous, and his heart upright. His Will is orderly, and his Reason irregular; his Understanding is out of the way, though he have innocence and probity for its guides. In fine, he is but a Hodge-podge of Truth and Falshood, of Purity and Corruption. In the same manner, says that Divine, If *JESUS CHRIST* be not God, he is at the same time the most holy and the most flagitious Person that ever was. For it is the greatest of crimes to desire to be taken for a God, when  
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one is not. How could it be, that so much Vertue should be founded on so great Injustice? that the proudest Man that ever was should be the Master of the most perfect notion of Humility that can be? that so holy a Doctrine as the Gospel should be the Work of an Impostor; and that so perfect a Morality, should be established on so great a Wickedness? The Treatise of the truth of Faith composed by *Ludovicus Vives*, is an Abridgement of all that the Fathers have written upon Religion, reduced into Method. One of his strongest Arguments, is the accomplishment of the Prophecy of *Hosea* concerning the destiny of the *Jews*, which he handles in his third Book, and whereof Saint *Augustin* speaks in the eighteen Chapter of the 28. Book of the City of God: but which seems not to be set off to all its advantages by *Vives*; for there is nothing more convincing to a solid mind, than a Prophecy delivered near a thousand years before it come to pass, and which is literally verified throughout the whole  
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World, for above these sixteen hundred years. The Work of *Marcellus Ficinus* is nothing almost but a proof of the Divinity of *JESUS CHRIST*, justified by the Prophets of the old Testament, by the Miracles of the New, and by the truth of the Doctrine which ignorant men without passion or interest have preached, who never deceived any, nor were ever deceived themselves. I shall wave the Writings of a great many modern Apologists, which are every-where extent, for proof of the verity of Christian Religion; which having been once settled upon the foundation of the Word of God, has stood unshaken amidst the Revolutions of Empires, fortifying it self maugre the tempests raised against it in the World, by no other defence but that of Patience and Modesty. What I have said of others, may suffice to give a Christian Philosopher an Idea of the use he should make of his Philosophy, in imitation of those Great men, who have only employ'd it for the establishment and defence of Religion. For all things well

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well considered, that is the only solid and real enjoyment of this Life. The truth is all things else, being transitory and perishing, the true Wisdom is to think of Eternity, and to be a good Man is the best of Philosophies.

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